

UNDER THE BAN.

(*Le Maudit.*)

A Tale of the Nineteenth Century.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M. L'ABBÉ * * *

Jean Hippolyte Michon

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS book (a mere literary effort) is neither polemical nor historical, as the title shows.

To the question, How came a priest to write a novel? the answer is very simple. Convinced that that style of literature best suits the taste of the present day, the author has selected it for conveying his ideas, on the same principle that led Plato to choose the form of dialogue, or Pascal that of letters. Bishop Camus, a prelate of blameless reputation, wrote novels; and though he was the Alexandre Dumas of his day, he was none the less respected on that account. Fénelon has left us a tale of consummate ability. Who doesn't remember, with delight, Calypso and the nymphs of her isle? Lastly, a creditable romance has appeared in our own day from the pen of Dr. Wiseman, a cardinal of the Roman Church.

So that the author of *Le Maudit*, although a priest, has but followed the example of Cardinal Wiseman, Fénelon, and Camus.

His subject is one of absorbing interest, for he writes in the hope of being read. Meanwhile, he can conscientiously declare that every line of his pages is penetrated with a profound veneration for whatever is venerable, though, in the interests of religion itself, he has suffered no false charity to deter him from denouncing those shameful proceedings by which it has been compromised and disgraced. Nor is he answerable for this severity. The blame of it attaches to the authors of the scandals, and not to the man who has had the courage to expose them.

By a certain fanatical clique this book will be held in abhorrence; but the candid members of the clerical body will frankly admit that, while its pages are free from any injurious matter, its tendency is beneficial to the holy cause of religion, which has been so grievously prejudiced by other pens.

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UNDER THE BAN.

PART I.

THE YOUNG PRIEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHAPEL OF THE INQUISITION.

THREE women set out one morning from an old house, built at T——, in the 16th century, in the "Rue du Taur," by a parliamentary counselor. The great clock of the Capitol was striking eight; but in the provinces it is customary to get up at daybreak. They were keeping an appointment of the utmost importance, in the opinion of pious females.

Madame de la Clavière, the oldest of the party, leant on the arm of her niece, Louise Julio. A maid-servant walked behind her, Madelette by name—a pious, elderly woman—who, at the age of fifty-eight, preserved under a feeble exterior all the energy of the Pyrenean race.

They took the Rue du Taur on their way to the Place du Capitole. Each was silently occupied in reckoning up her minor offenses. The old lady was conscious of having habitually indulged in a fretful and ruffled spirit: many a little snappish word had escaped her from time to time; moreover, she had been disposed to yield to a temptation to gluttony, which she delicately veiled under the designation of hearty appetite.

When a matron, seventy years old, has been living a retired life with a young niece, enjoying no more worldly society than that of two or three old gentlemen at an evening rubber, she is not likely to be a very heinous offender. And yet Madame de la Clavière was deeply affected. She walked with a slow, almost a trembling step. So great was her excitement, indeed, that Louise overheard her exclaiming in smothered accents, "My God! what shall I do?"

The younger, bright with the glory of twenty summers, was one of those noble types of the Southern race to be seen from time to time, which combine equally regularity and beauty of features, suggesting the idea that the sculptor's skill had conceived and executed them. Hers, too, was that exquisite grace, so justly preferred even to beauty. Tall as her aunt, who had herself been distinguished once in the world of fashion, she appeared to domineer over her with that stately head which she threw back unconsciously, without the least appearance of haugh-

tinness; while the poor old lady, bowed down under a crushing load of remorse, leant heavily upon her arm, to save herself from falling ere the time arrived for prostrating herself at the feet of the worthy father who at that moment appeared to her formidable in the extreme.

Louise discovered, too, on sifting her conscience, many little feminine weaknesses. Though she was passionately fond of her aunt, the irritability of the old lady had provoked irritability in the niece. Moreover, her glass had told her, as, indeed, it had been telling her for the last eight or ten years, that she was passing fair; and though she was not naturally vain, the daughter of Eve had, for once, taken in the compliment. Furthermore, she had amused herself a little—very little, certainly, yet still a little—at the expense of old Tournichon, a friend of her aunt's, who was looked upon at T—— as a spy and tool of the Jesuits. Add to this that the fair young charmer had, in moments of undefined longing, when the heart, brimming over with life, goes out to an ideal bliss, fixed her thoughts on a fugitive image, appertaining, doubtless, to some young spark who had spied her out one Sunday, when she was quietly repairing to the church of Taur, and you have the sum-total of her peccadilloes. She had been addicted neither to calumny nor gluttony, those two vices with which young and generous natures are unacquainted. Nor had she any thing with which to reproach herself so far as Madelette was concerned: she found her stupid, indeed, but she respected her almost as much as her aunt. No need for her, then, to be cast down in the presence of the worthy priest. Ah! ladies no longer twenty, it's a fine thing, I assure you, to enter the confessional so lightly laden.

As for Madelette, she did not even know what sin was. A poor ignorant creature, brought away one morning from her mountains, where her only living acquaintances had been the sheep which she had been accustomed to tend on the green slopes of Valcabrière, her only idea was to do whatever her mistress told her. So, when the good priest, the confessor of Madame de la Clavière and of Louise, had led her to plead guilty to certain wandering thoughts at church and in

her prayers, he elicited only vehement denials on all other misdoings to which humanity is prone. However, the holy father thoroughly understood his line. True, Madelette's confession was stereotyped: she would have expected, indeed, to forfeit her place in heaven had she altered it in any particular. Her life being so monotonous, it was natural that her weekly list of sins should be equally unvaried. Old woman though she was, she was as simple as a child; yet, at the same time, she had a wonderful faculty of recollecting any thing she might have heard. Whether she was everlastingly exercising her memory to the detriment of her judgment in the humble sphere in which she was doomed to silence, or whether this quality of hers resembled that animal instinct which, in default of the power of reflection, observes and retains the impressions of its most trifling surroundings, I am not prepared to say; suffice it to add that Madelette was a hopeful subject for pumping with reference to every conceivable occurrence in the house of Madame de la Clavière; and as her spiritual guide was a very Deity incarnate to her, it never entered into her poor old head that in this pious confabulation to which the reverend father invited the waiting-maid from time to time, he was otherwise influenced than by a genuine desire for the glory of God.

The rite over, the trio pursued their way in silence. About the middle of the street, on the left hand, stood a large building, with a plain, unornamented front, like a modern factory or barrack, in the direction of which Louise stole a long gaze. True, it was innocent enough; yet it was earnest for all that, as it sought to penetrate behind those frowning walls in quest of some dear object, whose face, to her joy, she fancied she had for an instant detected. At her age, it often happens that the eyes betray the heart.

They soon came out on the Place du Capitole. The two ladies found a momentary diversion in looking at the fruit-market in front of the building, which displayed a pleasing array of luscious produce ripened in that Southern sun, whose warmth and glory are never forgotten by those who have grown up under its radiance—at least, not for many a long year of their lives.

After that their route lay through a long, wide, and winding street, one of the main arteries of the ancient capital of the South. Turning abruptly to the right, they entered the Rue de l'Inquisition, a street deriving its name from the "Maison de l'Inquisition," in the possession of the Society of Jesus.

The frontage of the house is low and insignificant, but the building dates as far back as the establishment of the Bloody Tribunal at T—. A scarcely legible inscription in Gothic characters, fixing the date of its erection, is still to be seen over the entrance.

Nearly opposite, in the same street, is a niche, inclosing a black Madonna, her head encircled with a diadem of metal-gilt, her form arrayed in silk, and having in her arms the infant Sav-

ior, similarly crowned and robed. Before this ancient statue, held in utmost veneration by the citizens of T—, a lamp burns night and day. Was it so that the poetic fancy of the Middle Ages had confronted that dread abode, the fruitful source of arrests, punishments, and death, with this meek embodiment of tenderness and compassion?

Madame de la Clavière crossed herself and gazed at the shrine like a victim led to the stake and imploring deliverance. Louise had no eyes for any thing but the rich nosegays of flowers gathered that very morning and placed behind the trellis-work in front of the statue, while Madelette contented herself with muttering an ave.

They entered the convent by a narrow corridor, at the extreme end of which stands the chapel door. The little Jesuit church, conspicuous neither for general grandeur nor for architectural beauty, was remarkable only for a succession of gloomy boxes, along the low side-walls of the nave, containing, each, a large confessional. The genius of the order displayed itself in the external arrangements. Every thing was mysterious. No tablets, customary in parish churches, indicated the names of the priests enthroned in the several tribunals. A simple number, suspended in front of the dark oak cells, served as a potent means of communication between the wily fathers and the female portion of their flock. The males they admitted within.

Our penitents, having duly crossed themselves with holy water, bent their steps toward No. 8, the last in the row, on the right side of the building, and disappeared in the darkness. The next moment an elderly priest, with a pale and withered face, but an expression full of energy, descended from the altar, and, leaving the sanctuary by a side door, reappeared, after a few minutes, robed in a rochet, with ample sleeves, and established himself in his tribunal. A few of the faithful were engaged in their devotions at the upper end of the nave. Two other priests were occupied in hearing confessions in their separate stalls. A profound silence reigned on every side—a stillness uninvaded by the jar of the outside world, scarcely broken even by the occasional rustling of the silk dresses of the female penitents as they knelt at the feet of their spiritual guides.

The old lady, visibly affected, her cheek flushed, as though she were on the point of being driven to some humiliating disclosure, entered first, raising a dark curtain which fell behind her. For a time the only audible sound in the neighborhood of the mysterious retreat was the inarticulate muttering of the two voices, modulated by long habit to the proper pitch, and replying to each other in lingering monotonous.

After the priest had pronounced the usual Latin form of benediction, under which the aged penitent bowed profoundly, as though to gather courage by this act of reverence from the words of blessing, she enumerated, with tolerable composure, the various faults she had recalled in her

previous self-examination. Then, striking her breast, she added, "My father, I remember nothing more." And, leaning on the credence-table in front of her, she waited for his reply.

"Well, dear daughter, have you thought carefully over what I said to you this day week?"

"Yes, my father."

"And what are your intentions?"

"All that you would have them to be, my father. I have promised you unqualified obedience."

"Unquestionably, my daughter. But you are well aware that it is our duty as spiritual guides, especially in matters of such grave importance as the present, to waive the vow of submission to which you have referred, in order that the faithful may be free to exhibit the grace of a voluntary sacrifice. And, to be plain with you, yours is not very tremendous. To you, my daughter, so prone to meditate on the rapidity of our passage through this vale of tears, as well as on the probable nearness of that blissful event which shall withdraw you forever from the weariness and imperfection of our poor earthly life, I may say, without much hesitation, 'Soon, whether you will or no, you will have to resign that wealth from which I well know your heart is already disengaged. Why not anticipate that period by consecrating it at once to a holy use? Why not establish for yourself before your departure an imperishable monument of your pious devotion to the Church, and your munificence in her cause? The Church will bless you; my daughter, and our holy fraternity will offer ceaseless intercessions for their illustrious and beloved benefactress.'"

He paused for a reply, but none came. Only a long suppressed sigh indicated the anguish of her spirit. The next moment he resumed.

"You are listening, my daughter, to the whispers of flesh and blood, and are admitting the covetous promptings of your corrupt nature. Beware how you yield to the fatal suggestions of the Evil One!"

"Believe me, my father, I do not grudge the sacrifice on my own account. I would strip myself of every penny I possess this very moment—God is my record—so far as I myself am concerned; but my hesitation and distress arise from the fact that Louise and her brother are doubly my heirs, since I am myself a Julio and their father's sister. Can I—I ask you—conscientiously rob these children of their uncle's fortune and mine?"

"Of the fortune of M. Julio? Most undoubtedly. I have told you over and over again the proofs are indisputable that that money was amassed by secret extortion and fraud."

"And yet he bore such an excellent reputation."

"Of much use to him, if his dishonest gains have plunged him into the flames of Purgatory. I say again, there is only this way open to you to liberate his soul and save your own. Conscience demands the restitution of money dishonestly obtained; and the Church teaches us,

that when the victims of usury can not be traced, pious bequests answer the same purpose. You may consider yourself very fortunate in still having this chance open to you."

"But these poor children—"

"Poor children! very compassionate, forsooth! You speak like a thorough woman of the world! Why, I do assure you, my daughter, if I didn't know you, I should scarcely take you to be one of the faithful! What an unreasonable distrust of the providence of God you manifest! How can you tell that your dear Louise is not destined for a religious life? Of course, as her confessor, I know many things about her which I can not mention to you. As for Julio, your nephew, a few days will see him a priest. Silly fellow that he was, if he had listened to us when he quitted our fraternity, he would be with us now, but he will repent of his obstinacy one day. With his talents, what a splendid future was before him! However, he will belong, at all events, to the secular clergy, and will not want a fortune of half a million to make him a conceited upstart and a bad priest. Believe me, my daughter, God knows better than you what will be best for your nephew and niece."

"Well, then, my father—"

"Exactly so, my daughter; but I must have you more tractable than that. By giving way to these vain regrets and visionary speculations, you displease God, you imperil the salvation of your beloved husband, and resist the gracious summons to the grandeur and glory of sacrifice."

"Well, then, my father, I give in."

"I expected that, my daughter, from your tender-hearted conscientiousness. God loveth a cheerful giver. With your permission, I will remit to worthy M. Tournichon a form of will, which you will be good enough to copy very legibly. As this world is so uncharitable, and the will may possibly be assailed at the instance of the opposite party, I advise your nominating M. Tournichon your sole legatee. I would first add that I have expressly stipulated in the outline I have drawn up that a proper annuity is to be paid to Louise and the abbé. In this way, you see, we shall effectually promote your benevolent intentions toward your beloved wards. Our society, ever grateful to its friends, will not fail to protect them for your sake."

"I am perfectly satisfied, my father."

"That's sufficient. I reckon upon your word. Adieu, my dear daughter. Receive my blessing, and go in peace."

The curtain rose. The poor lady, more dead than alive, dragged her feeble steps back to her chair, where she sank down, hiding her face. Louise Julio took her aunt's place.

CHAPTER II.

A DOUBTFUL VOCATION.

THE peccadilloes of Louise were recounted to the father with that charming airiness which

young people occasionally manifest when they supplement an involuntary confession with the private utterance, "I am not so bad for all that." None so innocent of all humility as the young, provided they have a clear conscience. They are proud of every thing—even of their excellence—so to play the contrite is unpleasant to them. They accuse themselves of yesterday's misdemeanors with the conviction upon them that, before the morrow, Dame Nature will have her way again, and betray them more grievously than before. This is not exactly what the confessor would desire to see; but then it is to be remembered that the human heart is unutterably froward, and so there is nothing for it but to absorb these charming young penitents, self-satisfied though they be, when they utter their sweet "My father" with a voice that would go straight to the heart of a tiger.

So Louise specified very scrupulously every remembered misdeed of the previous week. Of course, the list was of that character to require the rosiest ink, should the young lady deem it necessary to enter it on the tablets of conscience.

Notwithstanding which, the confessor had frowned twice during the recital.

"In any other case than yours, daughter," he observed, with the utmost suavity, "such errors as you have pleaded guilty to would be very insignificant. By a compassionate God they are regarded, after all, as but infirmities to which the best of us are liable; and yet I can not help being distressed at hearing so frequently of these consultations of your glass, and cherishings of souvenirs, calculated greatly to alienate you from your path of duty. My child! my child! when will you rise superior to these transient emotions so unworthy of you? When will my gentle dove spread wide her wings, and bid an eternal adieu to an evil world capable of yielding her no rest for the sole of her foot? When will that happy moment arrive which shall hear the utterance, 'I hesitate no longer! I am altogether God's!'"

"You promised me time to reflect, my father."

"I did, daughter. So my only reason for saying this was to recall to your mind such considerations as might aid in riveting your future choice. Open your heart to me, my dear child; let me read your inmost thoughts. Called by God to decide your destiny, I much need a thorough knowledge of your feelings to guide me. Tell me, then, what you have thought upon the subject during the past week."

"God knows, my father, they remain the same. At times I fancy God is calling me to Himself, and happiness beckons to me from the midst of those kind sisters of the *Sacré-Cœur*, among whom my childhood was passed. There are ecstatic moments in which I seem to feel that a life far removed from the world would be heaven begun."

"Glorious seasons these, daughter; seasons when the celestial Bridegroom speaks right home to the heart of His bride."

"Most true, my father; and yet, somehow or

other, these pleasurable emotions are succeeded by others just the reverse. Outside life has its attractions. What little I know of it—the impressions I have gathered from the scanty reading which my aunt has allowed for forming my taste; in a word—shall I confess it?—a new world which I find within me, illustrated by an endless crowd of shapeless desires I could no more enumerate to you than I could to myself—these all unite to persuade me that life is not what religious books, sermons, even your representations, my father (forgive my boldness), picture it. I can not help fancying that there are things about it which I have yet to learn—a puzzle I little understand, but the full meaning of which I shall discover some day. Then comes the thought that these vague aspirations, whose object is at present unknown to me, with those endless perplexities which enter into and possess my spirit, will eventually meet with their lawful satisfaction. I know I explain myself very badly, my father, but you told me to describe my feelings."

"And you have given a very accurate picture, daughter, of those misgivings and heart-promptings which continue to render the world attractive, though an enlightened conscience would have you renounce it. The best have experienced this trial. God and nature contending alternately—the one urging to sacrifice, the other drawing back. Don't be afraid of the struggle. I foresaw that you would be called upon to endure it, and ought to have forewarned you. It is an ordeal involving severe suffering."

"You mistake me, my father. I have had no painful experience; nothing in the least amounting to anguish, I assure you. On the contrary, I am compelled to acknowledge that I derive great enjoyment from speculating on a life I have never tried, but on the threshold of which I stand. Moreover, while I silence many voices—respecting which I dare not even apply to my aunt—in revolving the great question, 'Ought I to forsake the world or not?' social life rises up before me so attractively as to make me forget my half-uttered vow to enter the cloister. Last holidays, I spent a little time over a natural history of my brother Julio's, which I brought to Clavière with me. Up to that time I had no conception of the marvelous activity of the living things that multiply on every side. What endless glory in this world around us! what endless delight in the studies that unravel its secrets! So far from doing me any injury whatever, they have attracted my soul to God, and enlarged my love for Him."

"Fine words, but fatal delusions, my child. Mere natural instincts after all; too visionary to form a foundation for permanent resolves. The young would do well ever to mistrust this love of nature, whose only tendency is to enervate the heart."

"And yet, my father, feelings which bring us to the feet of the Creator—which nourish in us a belief in His goodness and grandeur, in the eternity of His power and wealth, as He scat-

ters from the hands of His providence the treasures of inexhaustible life—like the material sun bathing us in his glory—such feelings as these are surely religious, or there is no such thing as religion at all.”

“Wait a moment, daughter. Don’t you see that you are giving the reins to your private judgment, while I have ever guided you to the safer and more excellent way of obedience, sacrifice, and mortification?”

“Safer and more excellent, doubtless, my father, for the cloistered nun. But supposing I were utterly disqualified for such a life?”

“You are all astray, daughter. That horrid book has done you harm. How foolish it was of you to read works of which you know nothing, and how wrong of your brother to—”

“My father, you surprise me!”

“Daughter, there is but one safe path—the path of obedience. Every other, as you very well know, perplexes the judgment and wearies the fancy. Meanwhile, listen to me. I am about to deliver a series of discourses in the Convent of the *Sacré-Cœur*, at which, as a great favor, a very limited number of young people are permitted to be present as visitors. You are looked upon already as a member of the house, so your admission will be an easy matter. It is my purpose to enlarge, on those occasions, on the happiness of the angelic life. That week of quiet reflection will serve to dissipate the evil influences with which a worthless book has infected a spirit hitherto so pure and blameless. Now remember, daughter, that you must—”

But, though the priest continued his prosy address, Louise had ceased to listen to it. For the first time in her life the spell was broken, and she was beginning to see.

Having uttered her thoughts to her confessor with extreme modesty, she had expected something like a serious unravelment of her difficulties from the lips of the man whom, up to that day, she had been accustomed to regard as the representative of God. His refusal to grapple with them wounded her pride.

“He treats me like a baby,” she muttered, and inclining her head for the accustomed blessing as she concluded her devotions, she left the confessional irritated and distressed. It was now Madelette’s turn.

Father Briffard was not in the habit of admitting domestic servants to his confessional. His process was summary with those who had no silk robes to rustle as a proof of station and wealth. To quote a school phrase, this Jesuit of T. was partial to fine linen.

Any citizen or artisan who required the services of a spiritual guide usually went to Father Renouillet—a lowly-minded, simple-hearted man, best adapted for a pious missionary, who preferred dealing with the humbler classes, and resigned without a sigh to his more assuming brethren the guardianship of aristocratic consciences.

Madelette, however, was admitted to the select circle of Father Briffard, and, sooth to say,

was not a little proud of the honor. She was fully alive to the consideration which induced the Jesuit to bestow such marked attention on an old woman of her class—far from intelligent, but a gossip, though of gossips the most artless—and impressed with the conviction that it was impossible to be too communicative in confession, both as to her own affairs and those of others as well.

In the long rigmarole which she considered her duty, if she was to state her troubles and infirmities, she managed to give a detailed history of Madame, Louise, the great seminary of T—, the Sulpicians at its head, together with the ordination of Julio, Louise’s brother, which was to take place in a few days, and of which she was very full.

From all that fell from her, the priest became more convinced than ever that the Abbé Julio, during his recent recess at Clavière, had not troubled himself much about the Jesuits, and had even joked his sister about her “Father Briffard,” whom he had characterized as the wildest of all his wily set. Indeed, he had gone so far as to say openly at table one day, when he happened to be in a communicative vein, that he pitied the poor woman who ever chanced to fall into the clutches of that good father—an expression of opinion which had made Madame color up and hasten to change the conversation. Meanwhile, on that very day, Louise had a conversation with her brother, and Madelette had distinctly overheard the young abbé warn her that they would discover one fine morning that their aunt had, by a charming will and testament, bequeathed all her fortune to the Jesuits.

“I don’t think there was any malice,” pleaded Madelette, “in all these remarks of the abbé,” for so she made a point of styling him, in imitation of her mistress. “So don’t take any notice of it, my father, for he is a most excellent man.”

“Be assured, dear daughter, that these calumnies in no way affect us. Our holy fraternity has ever had the honor of being persecuted. We do not accuse the authorities of Saint Sulpice of slandering us to their pupils; but a worldly spirit has found its way even into the seminaries; and such is the mistaken leniency of these good directors, that God alone knows to what lengths the evil will spread in our diocese. Julio is a wrong-headed man. When he studied with us, we knew how to keep him in order; but now who can tell where he will stop, with his self-sufficiency and foolish fancies? For ourselves, we never speak of him without shuddering. Ask God, my daughter, in your prayers that the day may never come in which those who have called him to the priesthood will bitterly repent it. Had Julio been guided by us, he would have been one of our most distinguished priests. He is admirably adapted for the pulpit: in the ungoverned liberty of the priesthood he will come to a bad end.”

“My father, how grieved I am to hear this!”

“Just so, my daughter; nor do I wish, by what I say, to diminish the regard you have for

him. We are very partial to the abbé ourselves; but he requires watching. From our position, you understand, from the esteem in which we are privileged to be held by the archbishop, we might have some influence on the future of this young man. It would be very ungrateful, on our part, did we wish to injure him, as well as very unwise, should he be prejudiced against us, not to be silent on the matter, at the very least. I should wish him to understand this, and you will oblige me by telling him what I have said.

"On the other hand, my daughter," he observed, as he rose to dismiss her, "you know, even better than I do, that his uncle's property was mainly acquired by extortion. Now we have no control over the excellent Madame de la Clavière in this matter; but I venture to tell you, in strictest confidence, that if she were to quiet her own soul by surrendering some of her wealth, I have reason to know, my dear Madelette, that you would be the first to profit by her having preferred her own salvation to the pleasure of burning in hell to enrich two heirs, Mademoiselle Louise Julio, and M. l'Abbé, her brother. Am I not right?"

"Of course, my father; you are always right," answered Madelette."

The old woman had been the depositary of her confessor's confidence, and grew taller in her own estimation on the strength of it. The penance with which he had visited her peccadilloes seemed light indeed as she sallied forth triumphantly from the sanctuary of Father Briffard. Her two mistresses had gone home without her.

CHAPTER III.

M. VERDELON DECLINES THE PRIESTHOOD.

ON the same day that Louise left the chapel of the Inquisition, with the painful emotions recorded in the last chapter, her brother Julio was taking a walk with his fellow-students. The black-robed train of embryo priests distributed itself in scattered groups along the uninteresting banks of the Canal du Midi. Here a professor descanted, for the 101st time, on one of those old traditions, heard so often at St. Sulpice, and quoted for purposes of amusement in recreation hours. There a merry youth, the life of the circle about him, retailed, amidst shouts of laughter, a series of jokes which he had diligently collected. Others, over head and ears in mysterious discussions, pursued excitedly that perilous path in which faith lies buried in the subtle creations of the intellect, instead of passing into those calm regions of the human conscience where the love of God is apprehended in the exercise of love to man.

Julio and Auguste Verdelon, his bosom friend from childhood, were walking by themselves. It was the last expedition of the kind he was ever to take. The next day he was to retire from the others to prepare for his coming deacon's ordination.

Though Verdelon was older than his friend, he had hitherto received only inferior orders. Those over him had long since urged him to take the decisive step of entering the priesthood; but the youth, attacked on all sides by a host of perplexities, with one fatal obstacle in his way, sought time for reflection. The two friends confided in one another with that perfect unreserve so characteristic of their time of life, and constituting, in fact, one among its purest and happiest luxuries.

If ever a noble spirit devoted itself to the service of the altar in obedience to an irresistible call it was Julio. According to his own statement, he felt himself drawn thither instinctively. His had been but a brief probation, and the old Sulpician who directed his studies had frequently said to him, "My son, you were born a priest." For some minutes he had been the only speaker. His friend, more thoughtful than ever, and evidently much depressed, scarcely answered his remarks for some time; at length, however, he broke the gloomy silence he had maintained.

"You are a happy man, Julio. You will thoroughly enjoy the sacred office. As for me, supposing I decided, I should make but a poor priest."

"How can you say that, Auguste, when you are so strictly conscientious? Do get rid of these needless scruples."

"Scruples! don't call them so. I know myself too well. I have probed my conscience too often to attribute my present resolve to those misgivings of sensitive spirits, leading them to stop short on the threshold of the grave responsibilities of the sacred office."

"Resolve! You startle me!"

"Wait a minute, and I will explain every thing to you. I leave the seminary to-morrow."

"Oh, Auguste! that is fearful news. How wrong of you not to have told me sooner! I might have diminished your anxieties, or have helped to extricate you from that deep dejection in which you are at present plunged. Auguste, you are timid, and that is both unmanly and unchristian."

"Perhaps you are right; but it is too late now. What would have been the good of my unbosoming myself to you? I should only have injured you by involving you in my difficulties, while it is by no means certain that your friendly sympathy, dear as it is to me, would have availed to heal the wounds in my mind and heart. You have a guileless, innocent spirit, but your arguments would offer but weak resistance to my terrible doubts. I am glad I was firm enough to shun the peril of poisoning your mind. Be assured that it was at no little sacrifice that I resolved to suffer alone. Do you remember those happy days we spent at Clavière last holidays? Your sister Louise and you were full of fun, and bantered me upon my serious air. You used laughingly to say that you were certain I found the vacation too long; and your sister, pulling to pieces the large blossoms of the

China-asters in the garden, used to throw the petals over my head like a shower of snow-flakes, in imitation, she would say, of the ancient custom of crowning sacrificial victims. You asked me if I meant to weep longer than the daughter of Jephtha on the mountains. Dear, kind-hearted friends! I often smiled at what you said, when my heart was sorrowful even unto death."

"Most jealously have I treasured up the memories you speak of, Auguste, though I little suspected, at the time, the severity of your sufferings. Had I had the faintest idea of them, I should have used other words to you than those of innocent raillery. Meanwhile, let me make one last effort to win you from your resolve. Though I am your junior, I am grave enough to deserve your confidence. In a week I shall be a priest, so respect my office by anticipation. More than that, I am your friend—heart and soul. Unbosom yourself to me. I have sufficient confidence in the fixedness of my own purpose to apprehend no injury to myself from any thing you may say. The sight of your anguish makes me thankful at my own escape."

"As you please, dear Julio. I should be, indeed, ungrateful if I did not respond to such affectionate interest. My history is very simple. You shall have it in a few words. You know how enthusiastic we young men are, and our veneration for the Jesuit fathers who have instructed us. You know, too, my sincere attachment to these worthy Sulpicians—the most unpretending and virtuous of priests. So long as these first impressions remained with me after I had ceased to be a child, my spirit was composed. Better still, I threw myself, with all the energy of my character, into that mystical career which modern rashness so often thrusts upon men utterly unsuited for the cloister, whose temperament demands the harder and more common-sense realities of the secular life. At that time I was in the full glow of the neophyte state. Every thing that was grand, glorious, and magnanimous seemed, to my thinking, enshrined in a life of devotion, humility, and sacrifice. The world had been unceasingly represented to me as a horror to be shunned; the affections of our nature as culpable impulses, to be subdued under pain of damnation; woman as a fatal evil, whom it was death even to think of; and the relationships of life as a standing peril to the soul—even, occasionally, the shipwreck of virtue. These notions I duly imbibed and cherished; they incorporated themselves into my inner being; and as mine never was a nature to do things by halves, I yielded myself to their influence with the ardor of the most desperate fanaticism. I was still in this state, of what I now call childish delusion, when, at the end of my second theological year, I went to pass the holidays with an uncle of mine, who has a charming country house near St. Gaudens. There I found a large and fashionable gathering of brill-

iant and distinguished people. My relative, a man of immense wealth, is a member of the Council General of the Haute-Garonne, very influential, and, consequently, possessed of good connections and numerous friends. I was then a young man. He introduced me to all the families of mark in the neighborhood. There followed a series of invitations and entertainments. God knows, I never lost sight, for a moment, of the decorum which became me as a Christian and an ecclesiastic. I was resolved that even the most thoughtless of the young men around me should never forget that due regard for my position which I myself observed so strictly. At the same time, the world appeared to me in a new light, though I had by no means surrendered my heart to its influence, nor failed in that prudent hesitation which the firm convictions and impressions of my entire previous life had naturally engendered.

"I was born an observer. The habit of letting nothing slip of the minutest circumstances occurring around us is one of the most intellectual exercises within our reach. So I tasted for two long months the delights of that mental research engaged in by a young and vigorous mind in the presence of novelties. In this way I studied the world, while I maintained sufficient watchfulness over myself to feel at rest as to my heart remaining true to its allegiance. Here, indeed, as I believed, was my great safeguard, preserving me in complete security during that fascinating journey of thought in which I sought after truth with all the earnestness I could command. My hours of solitude, too, weighed as much in their influence over me as those in which I gave myself up to what had now become my favorite pursuit. My uncle's library is rich, especially in works of philosophy and history. Some capital treatises, which I read most eagerly, showed me that in the narrow course of our antiquated divinity we had not even crossed the threshold of that wonderful temple which time has erected to the study of man, his nature, rights, and duties. Was it strange, then, that I abandoned myself so eagerly to these all-engrossing topics?

"My uncle put into my hands a few thoughtful historical works, in which the world around me was exhibited with all its mighty tendencies, its earnest yearnings after progress, its longings to break the chains of that social and religious thralldom by which it had been bound for a thousand years.

"Then, too, I suddenly discovered that the teaching of the Jesuits—our earliest masters—had been nothing but a cunning protracted falsehood; that all the facts of history had been so disguised as to make me hate that very civilization which I saw around me, the very age in which I was born, and to sigh after those by-gone years when nations were held in check like patient herds, following only in the beaten path, cherishing no other ambition than to be as the generations that had passed away before them. And so I came to ask myself if the clergy had

been falsely charged with the project of bringing the world into bondage to a spiritual rule.

"The period of the Middle Ages appeared to me the natural development of that perilous theory which, while it intrusts the Church with spiritual power, concedes the temporal with it, on the assumption that she is the rightful arbiter in matters moral, and that social and political economy belong to that category. And I saw at once that those protracted struggles of human thought which in the Western world resulted in the great schism of Protestantism, issued only from a general protest against that very tyranny which the ill-considered theories and traditions of my youth had upheld. And this idea, so utterly new, brought with it a wonderful light. Possibly I am captious and imaginative, but I resent imposition. My discoveries in history—all the evidence that I had collected round me, as I traced out the progress of the war between freedom of thought and priestly domination, drove me to the involuntary conclusion that, were I to join the ranks of the clergy, I should but be numbering myself among the deadliest enemies of the great human family, since, unhappily, in the name of the Gospel, and under the guise of liberty, emancipation, and progress, they are striving with painful energy to arrest forever the onward march of the race.

"My friend, the bare idea of being solemnly, indissolubly allied with the enemies of progress seemed intolerable; and from the day that I first said to myself, 'It is not too late; you may yet leave these willing but blind guides, who are dying in the darkness they call light,' from that day I was happy and free."

Julio had listened with deepest interest. He had been perplexed by the glaring contradiction between the noble, enlarging character of the Christian religion and clerical love of power. Liberal in spirit, but gentle and patient, he imagined he had solved the difficulty by transferring to lay shoulders the odium of this tyranny. Less exclusive, too, than Verdalon, he comforted himself with the reflection that there was plenty of work to be done by those in holy orders, and that he could conscientiously become a priest without abjuring his sympathy with the social advancement of the age.

"Are you not confounding parties?" he asked, interrupting Verdalon. "Why accuse the entire body of the ambition of a few men whom history exhibits as ever aspiring to a spiritual rule? We must keep in sight the divine and human in the Church. The one you are welcome to anathematize, for whatever man touches he spoils; but the other is noble and illustrious, and will stand forever."

CHAPTER IV.

VERDELON CONTINUES TO EXPLAIN.

"Be assured, Julio," said Verdalon, in reply, "I have not been guilty of the errors you de-

scribe. I believe, with you, in the divine origin of the Christian religion, and hence I venerate it. I know, too, that the Church, as the exponent and embodiment of Gospel teaching, is thoroughly distinct from her clergy. But I know, also, on the irrefragable testimony of history, that in the bosom of this Church—call it Christian or Catholic, as you please—after the grand old days when she gloried in spurning all that the world might offer of wealth or greatness, her clergy, organized into a private clique, self-constituted a privileged body, have hankered after that wealth which Christ, in His lowliness and poverty, rejected; established themselves the rivals of the monarchs of this world; and crowned themselves with gold on every possible occasion, in open defiance of His example, whose only kingdom here was a kingdom of souls, whose one diadem a diadem of thorns."

"But all this in no way interferes with the fact that the apostles and their successors have been intrusted with a divine mission."

"Certainly not; but you must acknowledge that it shows a terrible falling away, even from the teaching of these very men. Here we have them occasionally urging separation from the world, and for a thousand years pursuing it with pitiless greed. The Vicar of Christ, great in his spiritual vicegerency, has been gradually appropriating, for 800 years, the rich provinces of Central Italy, and is satisfied with nothing short of being enthroned as monarch of the world, with kings and emperors at his feet. Julio, if this is the Gospel, all I can say is, I know nothing whatever about it."

"There is no denying the inconsistency to which you allude; but, then, all the great representatives of the Church's *real* spirit have bewailed it. You know what St. Bernard thought at a time when the temporal power of the Papacy was at its grandest. You remember Fénelon's bitter yearning after the period when the Church, abounding in martyr spirits, plumed herself little on her temporal power; and his fervent exclamation, 'Would God that the bride of Christ were of the same mind now, and as ready to strip herself of worldly advantages!' And Lacordaire's famous saying about 'hunting for the Church between the time of the catacombs and Constantine.'"

"Of course; but all this only proves one point, that there have ever been those who have appreciated the evil to which the clergy have brought us by their grasp at worldly dominion. I agree with you that the essential spirit of the Church is the spirit of her Founder, and directly opposed to the tyranny of the priesthood, and therefore I cling to the one and quit the other."

"A most lamentable decision to arrive at."

"As you please; but let me appeal to your candor. You acknowledge that the dereliction of the clergy from their own teaching—deplored equally by both of us—is opposed to the doctrine of Christ and to the actual spirit of the Church. You have the clergy assuming to be the Church's exponents, living all these ages in the practical

denial of the trust confided to her charge—urging it with their lips, repudiating it in their lives. Can an inconsistent priesthood represent the Church? And can you blame those of us who decline fellowship with a body that makes the Church odious by holding her up as the inveterate enemy of freedom? Explain this anomaly as plausibly as you will. I won't cavil. Only remember, what can not, in fact, be denied, that the clergy, in their spirit and teaching, have divorced themselves from the Church; and don't be afraid to commend those who are resolved to leave such men alone to decay and die in solitary isolation, and to wait for the advent of more honest representatives of the primitive body."

"Just so; but, admitting the degeneracy, I think the more reasonable, practical inference would be, to associate one's self as soon as possible with them, in order to help in restoring the old spirit. At all events we should make the experiment."

"Julio, the hour is not yet come. All who, like yourself, are striving to bring about a state of harmony between the clergy and modern society will be compelled to yield. I honor your noble impulses, but I see also the miseries to which they will lead you. You are too large-hearted to rank yourself with the domineering party in the priesthood; and from the day that you decline to anathematize the present, and cry out after the glories of the Middle Ages, you will become an object of suspicion, and will be shunned as an outcast. For myself, I had no fancy for this distasteful prospect, and hence a strong reason with me, perhaps my chief one, for renouncing that office to which, throughout my whole life, I have felt myself to be called."

"My dear Verdelon, were I required to decide the question for myself this day, the motive you urge would never deter me. I deplore equally with yourself the fatal antagonism in which a large section of the clergy is placed, but I do not see that this affects the entire body. There is a thoughtful minority which has remained true to the traditions of the past, and has had the wisdom to shun that dangerous spirit which you have indicated. These are the real guardians of the vital spark. In common with those good men and true whose religion is practical, they constitute the Church's essence and her life. Ours is, indeed, a sad experience. It is a painful thing to see throughout the Episcopate, and even in the Pontifical chair, that mundane theory, the growth of the barbarous ages, that power and wealth are needed for the Church's spiritual welfare. But we believe, and are sure, that good times are coming, and that this effete tradition is near its end; and even though I caught but a glimpse of the glorious uprising of this better day, and insinuated into a few spirits only one feeble ray of the sunshine at hand, the attempt would satisfy me. I wish you were a little braver; but perhaps you hold back from other motives."

"It is not expedient, I think, to make parties in the government of the Church, and to oppose

constituted authority. It involves a disagreeable struggle between conscientious convictions and a delicate sense of honor. I hope your amiability of spirit may help to smooth for you what you must admit is a rugged path. God speed you on your way! Success will make a hero of you, defeat a martyr."

Meanwhile the evening clouds were lengthening along the plain. A gorgeous sunset presented to the two friends a sight which it is difficult ever to witness unmoved, and which dwellers by the sea may behold in its utmost magnificence. Southward, the vast irregular chain of the Pyrenees spread out like a great veil of azure bathed in gold and purple. The city, in the middle distance, with the sun in the back-ground hidden by clouds, whose edges it was gilding, was swathed in a rose-colored mist. There lay its buildings, a confused mass—the spire of St. Sernin and the lofty naves of the churches rising from their midst. An entire creation lived and moved in the fleecy clouds that covered the sky. Vast blue seas, immense forests, wondrous forms, such as fable, or geology, or the records of antediluvian days describe, presented themselves to the imagination. Nature, prodigal of her wealth, had spread out to the uttermost horizon a glorious landscape to the ravished senses. The two friends gazed a while at the magnificent prospect, and not till the clouds had lost their fantastic shapes and burning tints did they resume their conversation.

"I haven't told you every thing, Julio. I am most unquestionably concerned at the unhappy state of things I have described, and have no fancy for a dress under which popular feeling recognizes tyrants instead of brethren. But, besides that, I am by no means disposed to register a vow of celibacy; for I believe that a young man has no right to bind himself by so terrible an obligation."

"And yet, my dear fellow, this vow is taken every day, and thousands of young priests are faithful to it."

"Not a doubt of it, and you among them, when it comes to the time; for don't I know your high principle of honor and allegiance? I know, too, that there are many priests who succeed in subduing every thing that is repugnant to this obligation, but at the cost of what bitter struggles! and for what end? The majority don't believe in their triumph; you know that as well as I do. The world has its ideas upon this point, and will never abandon them. Things have happened from time to time tending to strengthen this incredulity. The upright priest is suspected as much as his weaker brother, and so the Western Church loses all the advantage which it calculated on deriving from the celibacy of its clergy. The Eastern communion has been wiser in her generation. She will ordain none but married men. On this point, too, I sounded myself; and, detecting in my heart a rising attachment, the extent of which I had little imagined, I learned that I was a man, and saw at once what a bitter, life-

long experience I should be treasuring up for myself if I took the prescribed oath. I should be rash, indeed, to make a vow when one look, one word, one pressure of the hand would be enough to upset my purpose. I should be sorry to submit my fellow-students twice to the test I was called upon to endure last holidays. They would leave behind them at La Clavière a poor bleeding heart.

"These are my reasons, then, for quitting this place. I told them to my director, who replied, in general terms, that the holidays had ruined me; that bad books had upset my brain; that I had listened to the suggestion of the devil, etc., etc. It was no use arguing with the good old soul, who is excellence incarnate; so I must go and make my final preparations. I will shake hands with you before I leave. Don't forget me, Julio. You are going to be a priest. May a kind Providence spare you those troubles which threaten the upright and loyal-hearted members of that body to which you will so soon belong!"

They had reached the town; there were people passing and repassing on all sides; so it would have been imprudent to have prolonged the conversation. Crossing the Place du Capitole, they entered the Rue du Taur, and soon disappeared behind the high walls of the seminary.

On his return to his cell Julio recalled his recent conversation with his friend. How often had he himself said as much as, and even more than, Verdeler had urged! But he had been endowed with a heroic disposition. If he detected dangers in front, he felt that he could overcome them. What is virtue worth, he argued, if she is never tested? Granted that the priesthood, in which I am about to enroll myself, has backslidden. The fact is to be deplored, but it in no way affects me. I shall be none the less able to minister to the poor, the weak, the weary of this world's stray sheep. It will be mine to watch over some retired village whither I shall be sent as its pastor. Of course, I shall have my troubles; but if I fulfill my mission, the prospect is glorious.

After the evening meal they met again. Julio, seeing that it was idle to oppose so firm a resolve, made no additional effort to influence his friend. Meanwhile Verdeler laid bare his heart still farther, intimating the deep impression made upon him by the fair Louise, whom he had met at La Clavière, and who appeared to him as the perfection of beauty and excellence.

"Pity me, Julio," he said, at parting, "but never cease to love me."

The silvery tones of the chapel-bell summoned the seminarists to prayer. Julio wrestled in vain to recover his composure. His guileless spirit was violently disturbed. The period of meditation which was to precede his ordination was inaugurated by a severe struggle. He passed the night in agitation; gloomy visions invaded his slumbers; dark phantoms grinned at him as they feigned to drag him from his bed, and threatened him with their vengeance.

With the first gleam of daylight he threw open

his window, and the breath of fresh air blowing across his cheek, combined with the effort which he made to tranquilize his spirit, had the desired effect; and when, in the after matin service, the sweet thrilling voices of the boys, his fellow-students, chanted the hymn with which, for so many centuries, the Church has been wont to implore the benediction of the Spirit, as a Spirit of light and grace, Julio joined his melody to theirs, and, soaring for the time from earth and its troubles on the wings of adoration and love, found rest at the footstool of His throne whose errands of mercy he was so soon to execute.

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO POPES.

In the empire of the Roman Church, which comprises, it is said, 200,000,000 subjects scattered over the face of the world, there are two kings. The one is visible to all, and is called the Pope. He is enthroned at the Vatican, with cardinals, chamberlains, prelates, and guards, arrayed like stage-dancers in a drama of the fifteenth century. The other is the real ruler. He is established at the Gesu, and is called the General of the Jesuits. He is the head of an association the most united, the most energetic, and the most powerful in the world.

The first of these potentates is addressed as his Holiness, the second as his Reverence. Should you ever be presented to the Pope, you will meet in the ante-chamber of the apartment where the Vicar of Christ will offer you his ring and his toe to kiss, and before entering which you will be required to make three successive genuflexions, four or five young bishops in violet soutanes, with rochets plaited in small folds, enlivening by a quiet chat the tedium of court ceremonies. When you have crossed the threshold of the Gesu, and are about to present yourself to the General of the Jesuits, you pass through a room where forty secretaries may be seen writing in every known language, and eventually find yourself in the presence of a man intrusted with stupendous powers, who will invite you to be seated, and enter into familiar conversation with you. He is the Richelieu of Catholicism; the other is its Louis XIII.

There is more real work done here in a few days than is achieved in all the assemblies presided over by cardinals, or even by the Pope himself, in an entire year. The Papacy represents the old economy of the Church in the Middle Ages, with its jog-trot ways, its good-nature, its genial fashions; while Jesuitism is administered with all the skill of that system of centralization in which lies the strength of modern institutions. The Vatican is a great feudal castle and home of domestic life. The Gesu is an office where each finds on his arrival, morning after morning, his appointed task, and works under the stern eye of a president who holds the interests of the world in his hands.

The Pope is prodigal of his gifts and blessings; representing Him who multiplied the five loaves as the desert feast, he imagines that the treasury of the sovereign of the Roman States is inexhaustible for a like miraculous reason. No case of suffering or indigence, we might truly add no pious scheme, is ever handed to him without his giving a handsome subscription; and when from the lofty balcony that crosses the enormous porch of St. Peter's he pronounces his blessing on the Church and on the world, a sensation of awe pervades the prostrate crowd, and those even who are not of the faithful are infected by the peculiar belief that in some sort and to some degree he is God.

The very reverend General of the Jesuits, on the other hand, administers an exchequer larger than that of twenty minor potentates, such as the kings of Bavaria, Portugal, and Greece. Yet every farthing that he spends is entered with the most rigid exactness. Revolutions overturn the old system of things. Under their influence, fair convents and wealthy colleges raised by some powerful religious society are transformed into barracks; and when tranquillity is once more restored, when the last throes of the political struggle are over, in a few years, under the successful influence of this great ruler of the order of St. Ignatius, buildings worth many thousands, funds invested in the most profitable and promising speculations, attest the outside work of that society, whose expenditure on itself is limited to the clothing of a few individuals, and the provisioning of their modest table. The Papacy receives yearly from the offerings of the faithful, from the proceeds of dispensations, gigantic sums, of which it reserves not a farthing for itself. Say there is some old Madonna of dark wood, like that of Chartres or Notre Dame des Victoires—should the Pope send it a crown, the diadem will be of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and will have cost 80,000 francs. The Papacy, like an inexhaustible fountain, is ever yielding. The Society of Jesus is a deep abyss, which would engulf through successive generations the hard-earned gold of preacher and professor, the inheritance so long and so patiently waited for, did not the terrible law of periodical revolutions fulfill itself from time to time, and transfer the gold of Delphi to the plunderer's sack.

The Popes are painfully conscious of the pressure of that rival power which, under the pretext of defending them, insinuates itself quietly in their place. Clement XIV. summoned courage at length, after great hesitation and many tears, to raise his hand against the encroaching tribe by disbanding his janizaries. After the terrible convulsions of the Revolution the Papacy, now at its last extremity, flung itself once more into their arms. Very soon their influence was painfully felt. They became the vehement opponents of Pius IX. in his political reforms; and now they support him only because they have thoroughly humbled his power, and reduced it to that state of

utter prostration, the precursor of its dying struggles.

Over and over again has Pius IX. sought to withdraw himself from this tyranny. On one occasion he fished out of the archives of the Vatican the authentic documents of their expulsion under Clement XIV., and directed Father Theiner to publish them under the title of "The Life of Clement XIV." The book proved to be the most formidable ever issued against the society since its contents had first been flaminated by the same authority. The Jesuits, pliant in the midst of their strength, bent their heads to the storm, and rose from it more vigorous than ever. It was expected, indeed, that they would have been utterly annihilated when the solemn sentence upon their prophetess, Catharinella, who went about in every direction predicting the marvels which were on the eve of transpiring in the Catholic world by their instrumentality, more especially the union of the Eastern Churches with Rome, was posted up in every direction, even on the columns of the great façade of St. Peter's. Meanwhile they received the check in silence, but soon forced a reckoning, and a return to their protection. Their great triumph was the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception; and the column of the "Immaculate," erected by decree of the Pope, served only to rectify their distinctive theology. Thus the Jesuits' Vatican has got the upperhand of the Papal; the true Pontiff sees himself surrounded with the real powers of the Church, while the other is free to give state audiences to the ambassadors of kings and emperors; to shower hosts of medals, rosaries, and "agnuses;" to send the golden rose to empresses and queens, and satisfy the general appetite for benediction which the populace of Rome is forever manifesting.

The General has always aimed at promoting the growth of the order in France. Rome is in her dotage; in religion, as in every thing else, she has long ceased to be a source of life and activity. France is the land of energy, and thither the Jesuits have directed special attention. For ten years they have been pursuing the perilous enterprise of establishing themselves quietly in the heart of that great nation, boldly laying hold of the education in all the towns of France, and building colleges intended to rival in splendor those erected by the State—bestowing on this last measure their special energies.

It was natural that T——, the metropolis of the south, and pre-eminently Catholic, should attract their notice. Unable, as may be expected, to content themselves with having for their college a paltry building at the end of the church of St. Sernin, they felt the necessity for erecting a costly and imposing structure in its room.

The same evening that Julio had tried in vain to sleep, a solemn scene was being enacted in the Maison de l'Inquisition. A secret council had been summoned by the provincial governor of the order.

When perfect stillness had attested that the fathers were all gone to their cells, and no one was straying in the narrow passages, seven elderly priests assembled in the council-chamber.

A single lamp lit the apartment, and flung its flickering lustre on the walls. Here and there hung some engravings, clumsily framed, the portraits of men of their own day, renowned for their piety in the religious world; a picture of St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Louis de Gonzague, a sacred heart of Jesus, a sacred heart of Mary, the martyrdom of some missionaries in China and Japan, and the appearance of the Virgin to the children of La Salette. An immense plaster crucifix painted black, and to which the artist had given the effect of metal by the skillful use of bronze powder, decorated the lower end of the apartment.

The furniture in the room consisted of a table covered with a green woolen cloth, an arm-chair behind it, and a few common chairs ranged round, while an old red brick flooring was the only relic of the decoration of that terrible apartment whence, in the Middle Ages, had issued many a sentence of death.

The reverend Provincial approached the table, and laid upon it a large leather port-folio with a steel fastening. The other fathers ranged themselves right and left. All went down on their knees as he uttered, in low, measured tones, the *Veni Sancte* and *Ave Maria*. The fathers responded to the prayer, and when it was over, seated themselves, bending their eyes to the ground.

The Provincial opened his port-folio, and spoke as follows:

"Fathers, I have just received from our very reverend General authority to build at T—a house for our order. You must have noticed the favorable position we have acquired in this place, where we are more firmly established than in any other town in France. Our flourishing college, too numerous for its present limited accommodation in the Place St. Sernin, requires without delay a larger establishment, where we might receive an even greater number.

"You approved last year of the idea of building, and I communicated our views to the General. They have received his sanction, and we are now to deliberate how best to carry them out. Here are the architect's designs. We must not have a shabby affair: our new structure ought to strike the eye by the grandeur of its proportions, and to eclipse all the other city buildings—the archiepiscopal palace, the seminary, the prefecture; and, save only in the matter of a porch of marble pillars, it ought to match the Capitol itself. You will agree with me that we are bound to exhibit our power to the world. For us poor priests, the humble retirement of our cell, our soutane, our daily bread, are enough; but our order must appear wealthy and great. You will be dismayed, doubtless, at hearing that the entire expense will exceed three millions. Out of this sum, it is true, 450,000 francs will have to be expended in a site in the

most eligible part of the city. But where is all this money to be procured?"

A suppressed smile stole over the lips of his auditors, and a low whispering was just audible.

"Three million francs!" said Father Grelet (who was seated on the right of the President), raising his head; "it's an immense sum. Under the old system we could have erected a noble provincial college for fifty thousand livres."

"Yes, under the old régime," said the others, with a sigh.

"You know," replied the Provincial, "that we can not look for help from the society. Every available penny of their property has been invested in promising enterprises, more especially in railways, for the purpose of forming a reserve fund, most carefully guarded, as a provision against any extremities that may occur. We ought to be prepared, for instance, for our expulsion from France by a possible revolution. No fear of that at present, thank God! but troublesome times may come, and it would be vain then to suggest the desirableness of having what ought to be ready for use. At Poitiers, and Bordeaux, and many other places, colleges have been raised, or are being raised, without the slightest aid from the general purse—why can not we do the same? Our rule is peremptory, as you very well know, that every new foundation should be self-supporting. So strict, indeed, is this obligation that, supposing we had two houses in the same town, each would be required to be independent of the other. To this regulation, in spite of its apparent harshness and opposition to the general principle of brotherly kindness, we owe the wonderful extension of our order in every town. Even in Paris our head establishment is forbidden to send the slightest assistance to any other in the city. Two years ago, Father Ravignan, happening to be present one evening at the house of a lady of position in the Faubourg St. Germain, made a collection for a recent foundation in one of the suburbs that was by no means certain of the morrow's food, and dissolved the pious and benevolent assemblage to tears. It is hard, I acknowledge: yet are we not universally revered for this voluntary poverty and independence? Our order must be wealthy and powerful, even though we wanted the necessities of life. You see the spirit of this our constitution."

"We must submit to so wise a regulation," said another of the fathers.

"Undoubtedly," added the Provincial; and turning over the leaves of his port-folio, he drew out a paper, and placed it before him.

"We have already got some money in hand," he remarked. "500,000 francs is our net income from our College of St. Sernin for the current year.

"Then there are 220,000 francs the proceeds of sermons preached by our fathers in behalf of missions, stations, and retreats, since our establishment at T—, including various donations collected in the town by the said fathers.

"92,667 francs collected privately, from house to house, in T—— and in the diocese.

"200,000 francs have been offered for our present establishment by the Society of the Perpetual Adoration.

"Special legacies obtained through trusts :

"The Countess de Levignac, 80,000 francs ; the Marchioness de Cadours, 120,000 francs ; the widow Marquet, 230,000 francs ; M. Lasson, late banker, 70,000 francs ; the Count de Villebrumier, 118,000 francs ; donations to the porter from time to time, 96,000 francs ; sums realized through diamonds, bracelets, trinkets, and valuable lace rescued from worldly uses, 60,000 francs. Total, 1,786,667 francs.

"So much for our cash in hand. Now here is more that may be confidently relied upon, unless some covetous and sacrilegious guardians wrest it from us by means of the law.

"The entire fortune of Madame de Fronton, sworn under 240,000 francs, bequeathed to us in the name of M. Buvalot, an excellent man, on whom we can reckon as confidently as on ourselves. The old lady is seventy-eight ; she is breaking visibly, and Dr. Legrand assured me yesterday that she would never live through the autumn. At the fall of the leaf she dies.

"The Baroness de Montech leaves us part of her property, in the name of M. Oussiat, our trustee. His lawyer reckons the moiety at 80,000 francs. The other portion goes to her sister, two years her junior, and will reach us by-and-by, I trust. Father Gervaise, you know this lady—she is your Philotis, I fancy."

Father Gervaise inclined his head, with a smile of assent. "I hope I shall be a match for her, reverend father."

"You see, then, what is ours—or almost ours ; but we are a long way off yet from the sum required. Our General writes to me : ' Undertake nothing without having the money in hand : ' so we must scrape up the balance in some way or other. Our first trust is in Him who manifestly protects our order, seeing that, after so many ups and downs, such conflicts with skeptics, blasphemers, and revolutionists, it is still at the head of Catholicism. But God would have us use the means, and that energetically. Surely in such a wealthy town as T——, where there are so many pious and devoted spirits, we might be able to get hold of these three millions.

"Let us see what prospects we have. Father Chevy, you are the spiritual guide of old M. Cayron. What are your expectations ? He has only a distant heir. Have you a will ready ?"

Father Chevy rose.

"I find some difficulties in the way, very reverend father : M. Cayron is very changeable ; his ideas don't always agree ; and, between ourselves, he is slightly in his dotage. I can reckon on his two servants—pious women, who never leave him nor let him see any body—and whom I have given to understand that they would each receive a handsome legacy if they succeeded in persuading their master to make a will in our favor. I need great caution in what I do : first,

in preventing any possible evidence arising hereafter that he was not in the full possession of his faculties when he arranged his affairs ; and then in introducing to him our worthy friend M. Legros, whom I had selected as a suitable trustee. I have made an appointment for to-morrow in connection with this business, and I don't think the day will pass without seeing our object accomplished."

"What do you consider the sum total of his fortune ?"

"Oh, very large—200,000 francs at least."

"And he is very old ?"

"Old, indeed !—almost in his second childhood."

"Then take care of the old man. And you, Father Grandier, what do you make of the Vicomtesse de Vateil ?"

"She, too, is a little difficult to deal with, reverend father," said Father Grandier. "She has two female cousins to be got out of the way—mad after her fortune, sly as the slyest Gascon, and who set me at defiance. However, I have them in hand. I have succeeded in convincing them that they had better share with us 400,000 francs than run the risk of seeing their relative die intestate, in which case they would only have one-tenth of the fortune, which would be divided among several collateral branches. They would like to have it all ; but they will come to terms in the end. The poor lady is visibly failing ; the first cold will carry her off. I mean to expedite my measures. There are already some portable articles of value promised me, without fail."

"God speed you ! And our excellent Father Briffard, has he commenced his attack ?"

"Yes, reverend father."

And the triumphant director, bringing out a portfolio before the bewildered gaze of the venerable council, produced a stamped paper, duly engrossed and registered, and handed it to the Provincial.

"It's a will !" he exclaimed, taking the document ; his eye brightened, his features twitched with excitement ; a smile of supreme satisfaction played over his lips.

He read the paper in the midst of a solemn silence :

"Napoleon III., by the grace of God and the national will, Emperor of the French, to all whom these presents may concern, greeting.

"I, the undersigned, Imperial notary in the town of T——, enrolled as No. 42, residing at No. 15 Place Lafayette ; having betaken myself from my aforementioned dwelling to the abode of Dame Eleonora Susan Guitrat de la Clavière, widow of the late Stephen Felix Julio de la Clavière, living at No. 27 Rue du Taur, have received, in the presence of the witnesses undersigned, from the said lady her last will, which I have set down as follows :

"I, Eleonora Susan Guitrat de la Clavière, widow of the late Stephen Felix de la Clavière, aged seventy-two ; knowing that there is nothing

more uncertain than life, and more certain than death, make the hereinafter-mentioned testamentary arrangements :

"I appoint by these presents—as my sole trustee, in acknowledgment of his great and uniform attachment to me, M. Vincent-Smarag de Tournichon, residing at T—, 13 Rue Mage, commissioning him to pay the following legacies :

"1. An annuity of 1000 francs to M. l'Abbé Julio de la Clavière, my nephew, at present a deacon in the seminary of T—, 16 Rue du Taur.

"2. An annuity, to a like amount, to Made-moiselle Louise Julio de la Clavière, my niece, at present residing with me at No. 27 Rue du Taur.

"3. An annuity of 350 francs to my servant, Madelette Romingas of the village of Val-cabrère."

"All which bequests, I, the notary undersigned, have taken down and engrossed in these presents ; valid for those whom they may concern.

"(Here follow the signatures.)

"True copy.

"(Signed) DUBOURDIER, Notary."

The paper was carefully stowed away in the morocco case.

"Very good, indeed, Father Briffard," said the Provincial. "At what sum do you compute this legacy—making the usual deductions for costs?"

"According to M. Tournichon at 450,000 francs."

"And will the testator live long?"

"She is close to her end."

"Then we may begin to build. What think you, fathers?"

It is doubtful whether the assent of those present was given with cordial unanimity. The Provincial rose. All went down on their knees. A prayer was addressed to the Virgin—the visible protectress of the good fathers—as bestowing upon them so liberally that worldly wealth which they had piously renounced by their vow of poverty.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTER FROM JULIO TO LOUISE.

It was not without a heart-pang that poor Verdelon went to his cell to complete his packing after having taken leave of the kind and excellent Sulpician, his superior. A lay dress brought by the tailor the night before replaced the black soutane, which he had worn for the last three years.

"Ah! old Roman toga," said he, depositing the long tunic at the bottom of his luggage trunk ; "thou art fallen from the shoulders of the proud conquerors of the world to those of the humble Apostles of Christ! To-day, in the eyes of the masses, thou art only a mark of pride, of tramping on the great interests of humanity, of tyrannizing over consciences.

Thou hast commanded reverence in the world, thou hast encountered misfortune. St. Leo the Great and St. Vincent de Paul have worn thee. Soon thou wilt be only a relic of the past, like the mantle of Plato, or the great philosophers of Greece, like the coats of mail of the knights of the Middle Ages, deposited in our modern museums. Thy day of rejection is at hand ; but how bitter the struggle, how severe the anguish, ere the defeated priesthood will fling thee aside!"

The departure of Verdelon, consequent on his resolve to give up the sacred profession, was the great topic of discussion at the seminary.

"He is quite right," said some, "if he has no predilections that way."

"Let us pray constantly for him," said the more sanctimonious among them, turning up their eyes as became their piety.

As he was descending the stairs, followed by an attendant carrying his luggage, he caught the mutter behind him of the single word, "unfrocked!" The blood rushed to his forehead ; a tear fell from his eye ; for the insult pained him deeply. A large group was collected in the corridor ; some of them feigned sympathy with the honest-hearted youth, to whom they had been very partial ; others seemed scarcely to know him, and regarded him with indifference ; a few fanatics darted at him glances that would not have disgraced the countenance of an inquisitor. He bent his eyes to the ground and passed on ; no friendly remark, not even a solitary adieu, proceeded from a single one of them. The least obnoxious of them would have thought it wrong to have compromised themselves by encouraging him.

"Just as he was leaving the corridor and approaching the door he heard a well-known voice :

"Once more, good-by, dear, dear Verdelon!"

Astonishment showed itself in the face of every one present at this act of moral heroism. The speaker was Julio, and he now stepped forward to grasp the hand of his friend. He followed him affectionately with his eyes till the heavy outer gate swung to behind the fugitive.

As Julio returned to his cell through the same group he overheard the following benevolent and veracious remark :

"Here is another of the set who is mad at not having gone with him."

Before going to the Rue Pergaminière, where he secured a small apartment looking south, Verdelon stopped before No. 27 of Rue Taur, and knocking at the door, gave to the old woman who admitted him a letter which Julio had confided to his care that morning.

The woman was no other than Madelette. She recognized perfectly in his lay dress the young ecclesiastic she had seen at La Clavière ; and crossing herself almost as though the Evil One had appeared to her, banged the door, and, walking more rapidly than she had done for twenty years, dashed into the drawing-room, where the aunt and niece were sitting.

"Holy Virgin!" she exclaimed, "whom have I just seen?"

"Who, Madelette?" said Louise.

"Yes, who?" echoed Madame de la Clavière.

"Ah, Madame, the young gentleman who was to have been a priest, but who wears his soutane no longer."

"What young gentleman?"

"The one that was at La Clavière last holidays with M. Julio."

"Well, and what is there wonderful in that?" said Louise.

"He gave me this for Miss Louise," said Madelette, addressing Madame de la Clavière.

She recognized the writing of Julio, and handed the letter to her niece, who requested permission to retire, for the purpose of reading and answering it.

Louise was at that time in the height of her beauty. Like the majority of southern women she had large features; but then her exquisitely delicate skin, a slight pallor in her face, those liquid eyes of hers, indicating the presence within of the purest and most guileless of spirits, all combined to soften her somewhat large type of countenance, and to invest her with tenderness, without detracting from her stateliness and majesty. Julio, who was a bit of an artist, used often to tell her, in his simple admiration, that she was like the Venus d'Arles: and she would put her hand on his mouth, and bid him hold his tongue, and scold him as an inconsistent priest, for trying to make his sister vain.

His admiration for Louise had tightened the bond which had united them from the cradle. He had a spirit of most yearning affection, and his whole heart was set upon his sister. That holy affection, he argued with himself, would be his safeguard through his coming priestly life.

And Louise, for her part, gloried in her brother. What a scrupulous conscience forbade her setting down to her own credit she attributed to his lofty and dignified character, so richly endowed with intelligence and love. She loved herself in him, as she saw his superiority to other men. Her attachment and admiration went hand in hand; to her, Julio's magnificent brow was positively glorified.

But Louise was a woman after all; and it was hardly to be expected that this bond, cherished though it might be by herself, and all-sufficing to one in Julio's position, could thoroughly satisfy her woman's nature. Marvelously gifted, a voice from within told her that hers was another destiny than the cloister life, even though her brother, the darling of her earliest affection, were at her side. So her heart beat as she opened her letter. A letter is always a mystery, and earnest and excitable characters love to break the secret of its silence, as they would that of some reserved incognito.

Julio's, written on a large piece of paper, in lines across the page, and that sprawling hand so common to impulsive gentlemen, resembled more one of those flying sheets on which sudden thoughts or overpowering feelings are flung

than the sober, calm epistle of a brother to a sister.

"What can he have to write to me just now, when he ought to be absorbed in his seclusion? My pretty letter, what have you got to tell me?" And she proceeded to get her question answered.

"MY DEAR LOUISE,—You will be astonished at hearing from me to-day. You know I am in the very midst of my preparatory retreat, and our rules strictly prohibit any communication with the outside world during those days of retirement and contemplation which precede our consecration to the priesthood.

"If you ask me why I violate this rule, I answer I am violating the letter of it, not the spirit. It will do me good to open my heart to you. After having laid my inmost thoughts before you, and thus relieved myself of some of my overflowing feelings and yearnings of every kind, I shall be more composed, and achieve more bravely my final dedication. Every thing here pains me. The special studies of this period are arranged with such want of perception. The tendency to mysticism which is enervating our modern priesthood is so ubiquitous. The genius of the Middle Ages, with its sensuous forms, its frivolous arrangements, protrudes itself so pertinaciously, and enslaves the spirit so unendurably, that one pities the misguided men who think to do wonders by cooping up the rising race of priests in these sacerdotal swaddling-clothes, to the utter paralyzing of all moral, mental, or spiritual energy.

"The Sulpicians, at our head, are gentle and amiable in the extreme, but, children of the seventeenth century that they are, they are yet held tight by the monstrous system which trains the young candidate for the altar with the impression that he is to pass from under episcopal hands to his place on a column, like another St. Simon Stylites, and to have no more contact with *terra firma* than had that exemplary person.

"Would you believe that in this week, in which (one would imagine) our instructors ought to set before us the vast scope of the ministerial office; or, as experienced pilots indicate to those just entering on perilous and distant voyages, all the shoals and quick-sands which might imperil our onward course in a life whose expectations, if we are true to them, and whose very privileges, if we avail ourselves of them, expose us to so many dangers, and lay us open to such humiliating experiences—I ask you, Louise, would you believe that, at such a crisis in our histories, we are called upon to listen twice a day to prosy harangues which we have heard a hundred times over, on death, judgment, hell, and other kindred topics?

"Of course we listen respectfully, but with unutterable impatience; needing, as we do on the eve of entering upon that calling which will throw us into the very midst of a new sphere of realities and new associations, teaching adapted to practical life, and tending to qualify us for the exemplary discharge of so illustrious a mission.

"I confess I am ashamed of the body to which I now belong; and had I not the simple faith you know to be in me, I should be racked with misgivings, and threatened with bitter regret that I ever took the path I have chosen. Nor am I to blame for this. Why will these good men persist in such an ill-judged course? Why will those who are in all other respects amiable and well-informed put up with this unnatural divorce from the time in which they live—its requirements, its passionate demands for progressive enlightenment? It must be because they understand nothing whatever of the condition of things around them.

"But enough of this: what has it to do with the present moment? Such fallacies, with others which I regret, in no way detract from my respect for those whose intentions are thoroughly upright, and who happily are better qualified to teach by example than by precept.

"And now, Louise, what shall I write to you? I am on the confines of two worlds. I am leaving behind me the delights of youth, and bidding adieu at the same time to those perilous delusions with which my clerical studies have too long surrounded me. I am plunging at once out of this quiet, contemplative career, into all the busy practical realities of the world. For this I have had no training beyond my own private reflections since the holidays, when I had a short peep into the world so called, and that salutary instinct which is the safeguard of the upright, and enables them to anticipate what may lie before them.

"Little enough this, you will say; and yet it is all I possess to qualify me for the active calling on which I am about to enter. But I spoke hastily—there is still another power, another aid which God has given me ere leading me to the experience of real life.

"My first trial after my ordination will last, in all probability, but a few months. I shall have a curacy in a little town, at St. Gaudens, at Mauret, or possibly at T—; and after that, some humble charge in one of the remotest valleys of the Pyrenees will be vacated; the indifferent eye of the vicar-general will run over the list of available curates, and I shall be appointed. This is what I expect; and then will you venture to join me, dear Louise? Do you love me enough to spend in such a place the fairest years of your life, in company with God and nature, and that hallowed brotherly love the highest and the mightiest type of friendship?

"Our poor aunt is in a very precarious state. The first shock she might sustain would be enough to bring on an affection of the brain which might prove fatal; so let me be thoroughly frank with you in reference to our prospects.

"I fancy the Jesuits have got hold of her; and we shall be lucky if these men have enough honesty left to allow us a small annuity sufficient to keep us from want. I warned you of this before, in a joking way, being anxious not to alarm you too much. Since then, a few words that fell from M. Tournichon, the Cerberus who looks

after her—words which have reached me from a thoroughly reliable source—convince me that the work of spoliation is pretty well advanced.

"I must confess I have no thought of outwitting this precious trustee—he would be too many for me. Nor have I the faintest idea of playing their own game with our Jesuit friends. But this I swear by all that we hold most sacred, if they succeed, I will expose them; I will make them pay dear for their robbery of two orphans, one of whom they tried in vain to enroll in their body, and the other in the society of the *Sacré-Cœur*.

"For exemplary and devoted though you are, dear Louise, you are not cut out for the sisterhood. Father Briffard, cunning though he is reported to be, will waste his Latin upon you, I am confident, should he endeavor to persuade you otherwise.

"In the event, then, of our dear aunt being taken from us, are you willing to be my good and gentle angel in my humble mountain home? I acknowledge how bitterly my heart will have deceived me, if this sweet prospect prove but an empty dream, and the great-souled friend that I have ever expected to find in you, were to prove after all but an ordinary woman, preferring an empty idle life to that noble heart-alliance which I have long since marked out for you. But God will spare me such a blow, which would crush out all the happiness of my life. Were that day ever to come, I should be driven in sheer despair to deem those men wise who have recoiled from the distasteful solitude of the priesthood, and its mournful forfeiture of the hallowed joys of family ties.

"Farewell, dear Louise. Saturday is the great day. You know well whose name will be first on my lips at the altar, in prayer to God that it may be remembered before Him. You know how heartily and how earnestly I shall pray for the sister I so fondly love.

"JULIO.

"P. S.—I forgot to tell you that this letter will be left at our aunt's by my friend Verdalon—the young ecclesiastic who spent a few days recently at La Clavière. He leaves us to-day. His is a noble spirit: he might have prospered in the ministry, but he returns to the world, to my great regret, under a feeling of dissatisfaction and insufficiency.

"What a boding future does all this portend for Catholicism! How many souls are bruised! How many faithful spirits will, ere long, be holding back from the pastor's office; while selfish natures, craving only the slender provision earned more easily than in the path of toil, are pressing into the sanctuary! Fully prepared for three years of irksome seclusion, they will emerge from it with a lofty air—a garb bespeaking some measure of reverence, and the certainty of maintenance for the future. Then come the ambitious, with the gold ring and episcopal robe glittering in the distance—a class to be found still in the Church, as much as in the world,

who would sell alike their conscience and their God for the miserable consideration of honor from man.

"Unhappy Church! When will she recover that glorious spirit with which she rose, fair as the sun, from the gloom of the Catacombs!"

Louise had remained standing at the little window of her chamber, deciphering her letter by the last flickering beams of daylight. A cold perspiration gathered on her forehead, the paper fell from her hand, and, overpowered and trembling from head to foot, she sank down into a low chair behind her.

"Julio, Julio!" she murmured, "I shall break your heart!"

And a long, long silence reigned in the room.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP.

HIS EMINENCE LOUIS AUGUSTE CHARLES DE FLAMMARENS, Cardinal of the Roman Church, by the title of "La Trinité du Mont," Archbishop of T——, was a fine old man, with a frank, pleasant mien, presenting an agreeable combination of the gentleman, the prelate, and the man of the world. The aristocracy of T—— did not care much for him, because, under the influence of his liberal ideas, he had point-blank refused, on his first arrival in his see, to associate himself with inveterate Legitimists, while, by his intimacy with the Prefect and the Government officials, he had earned for himself the reputation of a political renegade. There were not wanting those, indeed, who were bold enough to assert openly in the drawing-rooms of T——, that the cardinal had purchased his hat by his servility to the Government. Yet, in spite of this serious ill-will, good taste and expediency both secured him the outward manifestations of courtesy and respect; "which is all I ask," he used to say, "from these worthy gentlemen."

On coming to T——, he had affected harmony with the Jesuits; and though they knew that he hated them cordially, they were too cautious to appear to suspect the fact. Wherefore, they besieged him with a thousand protestations of regard, and reiterated, on convenient occasions, their confidence in his thorough goodwill. He, too, for his part, spoke of them officially in terms of warm regard; but his expressions were mere spurious coin after all.

However, their daily increasing influence in his episcopal city, the complaints of the curates, who, timidly, no doubt for fear of being betrayed, but incessantly declared that the Jesuits were the actual rulers of their parishes, and only left to their influence the most insignificant of their flock; added to this their cunning acquisition of fortunes, the pious frauds they employed in netting the richest offerings of the faithful, the positive certainty that, in a little

time, an imposing structure would be erected by them in the centre of T——, rivaling in size and splendor the Capitol itself, of which the citizens were so proud: all these facts combined had somewhat revived the anxieties of the venerable prelate. Consecrated at the commencement of the reign of Louis Philippe, he had been accustomed, like all the Gallican episcopate, to that absolute power communicated under a despotism. The autocrat hitherto of every diocese he had administered, unvisited by the faintest shadow of opposition, he now found himself face to face with the most formidable of all—that which enchained consciences, secured to itself public favor, and, practically asserting its own supremacy, left him nothing but the burden of office, unless, indeed, he could manage to recover that moral preponderance—the most important element in spiritual power.

He had just lost one of his vicars-general—the Abbé Jolibert—a man of average private worth, but who had been weak enough to suffer the Jesuits to flatter him into their power. This person—on whom the Jesuits had heaped the most outrageous eulogiums during his life, calling him a saint, well knowing that thus they were securing to themselves a powerful ally at the archiepiscopal board—had been succeeded at his death by the secretary-general, an intimate friend of the archbishop's, and who was at no pains to conceal his indifference to the formidable Order.

The new secretary had not yet been named. This important office, laying before whoever filled it all even the most secret correspondence of the diocese, was much coveted by the junior priests. Of course the Jesuits had their candidate; they would have been only too thankful to get one of their tools appointed. Indeed the last requiem had not been chanted over the scarcely cold remains of their old protector ere the Provincial visited the cardinal with all speed to condole with him "on the loss of a man whose equal was not again to be found in such evil times." Being fully well informed, from semi-official sources, that the secretary-general was to succeed to the vacant office, he named, with thorough professional artfulness, the young Abbé Lurson, "a pious and modest priest, of distinguished manners, exemplary diligence, quick perception, and, probably, the only one of the curates of T—— completely qualified for the post in question."

The cardinal thanked the sly old fox with such well-feigned heartiness, and seemed so enchanted at the idea that the worthy fathers had thus providentially been enabled to light upon this prince of secretaries just in the nick of time, that the Provincial, returning to his quarters with a smile on his face, contrary to all the traditions of his Order, was unable to suppress his gratification, and gave free vent to his feelings before five or six present; assuring them that he had the cardinal under his thumb, and that if they had lost M. Jolibert, he felt certain he would be able to insinuate into his

room a young man warmly devoted to the interests of the Society.

That same day the cardinal went to the Sulpicians to hear a report from the superior on the young priests to be ordained the following Saturday. He had just ascertained, on excellent authority, all the particulars of Madame de la Clavière's legacy to the Jesuits, and also the name of the pseudo-executor, as well as the intended robbery of the orphans. His honest indignation was violently aroused, and, apart from a slight unwillingness which he might possibly entertain, as bishop, that one of his priests should lose a good fortune, and with it that independence which is always useful in the priesthood, he detected in the whole transaction an additional illustration of those nefarious proceedings, already known to him, by which the Jesuits were everlastingly possessing themselves of extensive fortunes.

So when the superior reached Julio's name, in running over his list, the cardinal listened with marked attention. To all his inquiries as to the young man's character and abilities he received most favorable replies.

"The Abbé Julio, monseigneur, is unquestionably one of the most promising candidates we have had for many years. Like all young men, he is a little too enthusiastic and imaginative, and, on occasions, rather unguarded in his expressions. But these are defects which will disappear as he grows older. At the same time, while I state to your eminence our own opinion of him, I must add, in all candor, that we have received a protest against him, on which we have ourselves already deliberated, but which we shall be thankful to submit to your judgment."

"Where does it come from? Is it signed?"

"Certainly, your eminence, otherwise we should not have condescended to look at it. It is signed by a Jesuit father."

"What are they meddling with now?" exclaimed the archbishop, angrily. "They will want to ordain next! It's the only thing they don't do in T—."

The council exchanged glances, and a furtive smile stole over their lips, though not a word escaped them, while he added,

"Show me the letter; I'll settle it." And he read it aloud as follows:

"T—, 10th September, 1856.

"M. SUPERINTENDENT, MY WORTHY BROTHER,—I am aware that you will have an ordination in a few days, and that one of our former pupils, the Abbé de la Clavière, will offer himself, as we learn, for the priesthood. We hesitated to communicate to you our own impressions as to the suitability of this young man, in whom we have ever taken a lively interest, at the commencement of his diaconate; shrinking from the heavy responsibility of offering any impediment whatever at such a period.

"Hence our silence at that time: a silence, however, for which we now deem ourselves

blamable. We have learned, on good authority, that during the recent recess he exhibited a considerable declension from that state of mind which his position required. He has been reading secular books, and even worse; his conversations with his sister have been marked by frivolity; it would, indeed, appear that the unfortunate youth has been seized with certain new and most dangerous opinions, which we need not specify, calculated to estrange him more than ever in spirit from his intended office. These are grave charges, Sir, and we should have been culpably remiss, and responsible one day before God, had we failed to inform you of our misgivings with reference to his ordination, which we regret is so very near.

"Be assured that nothing but our good-will for the diocese would have urged us to a measure always unpleasant, but from which we dare not recoil when conscience and the interests of our holy religion alike demand it.

"Receive, etc., etc.,

"For the Rev. Father Provincial,

(Signed) "FOURNIER, S. J."

"Quite so," said the archbishop, laying the letter on the table. "They have robbed him, and now they mean to persecute him. I see through them perfectly.—We will keep this document," he resumed, taking it up again; "it will be useful in exposing their treachery. Nay, we will go further, since your recommendations of this young man are so excellent. We are not disposed to see the Jesuits the bishops of our diocese. From this day forward we mean to show them what we think of their protests against our clergy. We name the Abbé Julio de la Clavière our Secretary-General."

It is easy to understand the effect of this royal speech on men so cautious and timid as the Sulpicians. All bent low before the intimation of the master's pleasure. However young and inexperienced, in their judgment, Julio was for the vacant post, they saw pre-eminently in his appointment a decided slap at the Jesuits, and this pleased them.

The cardinal's carriage was waiting at the principal entrance of the seminary. The superior escorted him into the street. As they parted the archbishop said,

"Tell the young abbé that he will enter on his duties at the palace next Monday."

Two hours after this occurrence, in which the cardinal archbishop had shown so much spirit, the Jesuits received from their spies a full account of all that had passed at the seminary. His last words to the superior in the street had been overheard. Clearly he had deceived the Provincial: as clearly he was about to appoint some protégé of the Sulpicians instead of the Abbé Lurson. The question was, Who? and this they felt must be ascertained at all costs. Now a task which would have puzzled the police of T— was a trifle to our friends. They sent without delay to the Seminary an old Dr. Déteilh, a physician without practice, who, for a

small annual consideration, affected to object to the Jesuits, and so could not possibly have been suspected of being their most obedient, humble servant. He had managed for some years past to worm himself into the confidence of M. Bournal, an excellent Sulpician, as artless as his brethren, and had in fact chosen him as his spiritual director.

So this old gentleman, gorgeous with a white cravat and huge shirt-frill, came with all proper penitence to seek religious consolation in the chamber of M. Bournal. In the course of conversation he casually observed that the appointment of the archbishop's secretary was the one subject in every body's mouth at that moment; and that the Jesuits were furious from the conviction that that appointment was the work of the Sulpicians.

"But how could this have got wind in the town?" asked M. Bournal, playing the part of the crow in the fable, "when all that passed on the subject was in confidence between his eminence and ourselves."

"Nothing more simply explained, father. His eminence was overheard in the street naming to your superior the new secretary, and fixing the day on which he was to enter upon his duties. I heard the name. It's the Abbé—Abbé—bless me, what a thing it is to be getting old!—the Abbé—Abbé—stay, I have it; it's a name, too, easily remembered."

"M. Julio de la Clavière?" said the Sulpician.

"Of course, that's the name, that's the name; my memory's going fast."

And taking up his hat and his long stick he made his bow and departed. Gliding rapidly down the grand staircase, he lost no time in threading the intervening streets, and, reaching the sanctuary of the Provincial, who admitted him by a secret door, he gasped out in dismay the fearful name, "the Abbé Julio de la Clavière!"

"Good Heavens!" cried the Provincial, "what a hateful choice! why, the man is our bitter enemy! But these soft Sulpicians are always playing the fool. We must lose no time, I see, if any thing is to be done: my good doctor, excuse me, I must go out immediately. A thousand thanks for such admirable exertions. Deeds like yours are recorded in the book of life. They glorify your declining years. Blessings on you! good-by."

And the father a few moments afterward was knocking at the door of the Marchioness de Maslacq, a pious woman much esteemed in T—, especially by the cardinal, who admired her sound sense, and sometimes even listened to her advice.

The marchioness was no passionate admirer of the Jesuits, but she was under an obligation to them. They had been the means of procuring for her eldest son a splendid alliance, and had thus imported into the comparatively empty treasury of the old house of Maslacq a dowry of many millions.

The noble-minded are always grateful; and

hence Madame de la Maslacq could scarcely refuse to oblige the provincial.

"Save our holy religion, marchioness! I entreat this of you, if I must, as a personal favor. You know how devoted we are to his eminence. Well, these excellent Sulpicians are committing him to a most grievous scandal. They have absolutely succeeded, from a vanity for which I suppose we must forgive them, in palming off upon the archbishop a young madcap for the vacant secretaryship, a former pupil of ours, whom we know only too well. This young idiot will do nothing but make mistakes. We are well aware that he has numbered himself with the enemies of our order. Now, at a time like the present, you see, Madam, when the infidel and the revolutionist are joining hands against us, it is of the utmost importance that we should have a powerful ally near his eminence, who, with a certain favorable section of society, is our only support at T—. You can easily conceive how coerced we should be in our efforts in the good cause if we had an enemy near our constant friend the archbishop. But I feel assured, Madame la Marquise, that you can easily prevent this."

"Possibly so. I agree with you that our friend the cardinal is a little hasty; but he is an excellent man."

"Most excellent, most excellent, beyond doubt. I am entirely of your opinion, kindest and best protectress. And we ask you—less in our own interests than in those of the cardinal—to whisper one word in his ear, warning him against so irreparable a mistake before it is too late."

"I'm not overfond of meddling in business matters, my dear father, with which women have no concern: moreover, the cardinal has a way with him of frowning ominously when one attempts it. But I will do my best for all that to prove to you that I am not ungrateful."

"Thanks. It would be as well, I fancy, without appearing to be in possession of any special information with regard to this most injudicious choice of which we have been speaking, to warn his eminence against any possible choice of the Sulpicians, who are notorious for their ignorance of the character and abilities of the youths intrusted to them; and, at the same time, to espouse the cause of a very efficient young man, whom I have already named to the cardinal."

"Will you be kind enough to write the name of your protégé on this card?"

"Certainly—the Abbé Lurson" (writes).

"That will do; I will see the cardinal."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST STRUGGLE WITHIN.

WHEN Louise recovered from the shock she had sustained on reading Julio's open-hearted but imprudent letter, she hastened to remove all

traces of the emotion she had been unable to repress before returning to the drawing-room. But then came a perplexity:—she could not possibly show her aunt an epistle which contained such sentiments; nor could she by any possibility refuse it, if she were asked for it, as she most certainly would be. Her only resource was an evasion—perhaps (for the first time in her life) an untruth. She tore the fatal letter into a thousand pieces, and flinging them out of her high bedroom window, watched them driven by a brisk wind over the roofs of the houses in the Rue du Taur. Having accomplished this, the young lady marched down stairs.

"Aunt," she observed, "Julio sends you heaps of love. He found time to write to us to assure us that he has not been overworked in his retreat. He is wonderfully well, he says, and congratulates himself on the delight of being soon with us."

"Ah!—how nice. Read me the dear boy's letter, love—he writes so nicely."

"Oh dear! I'm so sorry, aunt—I went and tore it up and threw it out of the window, that I might amuse myself with watching the pieces whirling round and round, and drifting into the distance with the wind."

"What a baby you are, Louise! I thought you were too big for that sort of thing."

There was no further explanation. Louise was unusually cheerful, more affectionate than ever to her aunt, and more gracious to Madelette; but her heart was bursting. Scarcely had the usual hour arrived for leaving her aunt to her devotions, when she retired to her room and sought relief in a flood of tears.

But it may be asked, why this overwrought excitement? Simply because woman—inasmuch as she is not her own mistress—inasmuch as fatal conventionalities, circumstances often the most trivial, are the sole disposers of her future, while happiness or misery overtake her so unexpectedly as to derange plans the most reasonable and the most prudent—has, in compensation for all this, been providentially endowed with marvelous foresight, enabling her to foresee coming troubles. Is it that this boon has been accorded to her, as to all the weaker ones, that the advent of suffering may take her less by surprise, and that she may be the better able to fortify herself against impending peril? We must believe as much, if we are to account for that inequality of independence and freedom in which she has ever been found, even in the most advanced stage of civilization.

Louise had never reflected for a moment that her fate was linked to that of an aged aunt, and, after that relative's death, to the destiny of a brother who was on the eve of entering the trammels of the priesthood. By a species of second-sight, all her future unfolded itself now as an anticipated history. Her aunt dying of old age; the Jesuits shamelessly plundering the

orphans; Julio too high-spirited and too upright to succeed as a priest; and finally, the two victims banished to some obscure corner where even the compassion of a friend would fail to reach them. Such a prospect, for one hitherto so full of life and heedlessness, and in such profound and peaceful security, was as the impending sword of calamity—the foretaste of terrible woes. Was it so, that in suffering only true grandeur of soul could display itself?

Then came the thought of sacrificing herself utterly—youth, beauty, love, and longings after happiness—to the isolated existence of a humble presbyter. The Jesuit confessor might prate in vain of mysticism and spirituality to his fair penitent; in vain might he throw out to her the imaginary allurements of the ecstatic life of the *Sacré-Cœur*—for nature, mightier than the paternal eloquence of Father Briffard, had asserted her superiority over all his arguments. And at that moment a thousand conflicting thoughts—disgust at religion; unfathomable yearnings after all that life demands of living ties; an instinctive repugnance for whatever aims at chaining down in obscurity and forgetfulness the spirit conscious in itself of vehement longings for joyousness, glory, and freedom—rushed tumultuously into her heart, with the wildness of the waves of the storm-lashed sea!

Soon, however, like those very same angry billows expiring peacefully on some quiet strand, under the opposing hindrance of a few grains of sand, which even their might can not remove—the tossings of heart, aroused so roughly by these first tempests of her life, subsided into calm.

"Daughter of feeble faith and proud presumption, dost thou murmur still? Is God pledged to give thee continual sunshine? Art thou indignant at the mere thought of suffering? What if calamity overwhelmed thee at a single blow? Whence thy warrant for imagining that thou alone art privileged to escape misfortune?"

Such was the sudden thought that flashed across her. Julio had strongly urged upon his sister's mind what he termed submission to the dealings of Providence. "All other devotion perishes," he was wont to say, "but this remains." And now she dreaded lest she should have blasphemed that tender care that watches from heaven the humblest and the weakest. She recalled those wise and gentle words, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Heavenly Father's will; and that if the lilies of the field are so gloriously arrayed the child of God will never be cast off.

The image of her loving brother, so kind to her, in thus giving her a proof of his devoted attachment, in the picture he had sketched of their united life when she was to be his comfort in the midst of his solitude, was potent enough to alleviate the exceeding bitterness of her previous apprehensions.

"After all," she said, "Julio is no tyrant.

He cares for me too much to restrain my freedom. Poor fellow, he thinks that there is no other happiness in the world than the love of brothers and sisters; and this is what he offers me! Ah, will the day ever come when I may have bitterly to regret that I ventured to cherish a less Platonic attachment? Meanwhile, these Jesuits want to rob us. Is it possible that they can contemplate such wickedness? Surely not! and yet, will they?.....That would explain Father Briffard's strange persistence in urging me to enter the *Sacré-Cœur*. I should bring the worthy fathers a noble dowry! Gracious Heaven! what a trial for my faith! These men preach at us, argue with us, all with a view of working intrigues and grasping fortunes. What horrible contradictions! I am lost in thinking of them.

"Now, I remember my outbursts last recess. Verdelon, Julio's friend, attacked most violently these very men—his old masters. I thought him ungrateful at the time. What if he were right?

"But is there no way of warning my simple-minded aunt against these plots? Clearly old Tournichon is their instrument. The report is that he is a Jesuit. I don't exactly understand what is meant by that; but it is enough to justify my thwarting him. He is my aunt's friend, and constantly spends his evenings with her."

So soliloquized Louise. The remembrance of Verdelon had crossed her mind—it returned again. She sought to account for the motives which had led him to abandon the priesthood. The more so, because she knew him to be grave, reserved, unaffected, and entirely free from that frivolity which too frequently characterizes young men of the world. She asked herself, moreover, how it had happened, that, after spending so many years in the seminary, he had bid adieu, at the last moment, to a career for which, in her presence, he had professed so strong a liking.

Then she remembered many a discussion which she had heard between him and Julio. Grieved as she had been at the time by his ill-concealed hostility to the Jesuits, she had been struck by his great intelligence, the richness of his language, the extensive knowledge which he had acquired on so many subjects by dint of hard study.

And his nature was so truthful. His entire character evinced such an utter repugnance to whatever was hypocritical or bigoted. He spoke, too, of the poor, the insignificant, the weak, of the children of toil and grief, with such a warm affection, that it was difficult, after admiring the rarity of his mind, to refrain from loving the generosity of his heart.

All these impressions, received many months back, and which had gradually disappeared from her mind, returned at this crisis with a vigor at which she herself was surprised. She went so far as to admit that his name, Auguste, was at once noble and charming; that his voice, too, was very agreeable and full of tenderness. There were notes in that voice, she thought,

which penetrated the soul with an influence never afterward to be forgotten.

His noble mien, his pure and lofty brow, his frank, open eyes, his mouth large, it was true, but with lips refined and exquisitely chiseled, his decided chin, so indicative of firm resolve, completed in her recollection the portrait of a youth who, by one of those whimsical reactions in the mind of a pious damsel, had, at that moment, in her eyes, the merit of not being over-attached to the Jesuits, and of having had the courage to brave the resentment which, from a certain section of the world, overtakes those who presume, in current phraseology, "to fling their gown to the nettles."

And so Louise arrived at the decided conclusion, by these hurried musings which had occupied her thoughts in involuntary succession, and graven themselves indelibly there—that, should she chance ever to meet M. Auguste Verdelon in society, she would by no means regard him with indifference.

In the midst of this whirl of feelings and apprehensions she was overtaken by the conviction that she was getting very sleepy. Kneeling down for her evening devotions, she found that her imagination and her excitable faculties had been so strongly aroused that it required all the self-control she possessed to repeat her simple Pater. The rest of her prayers, to her unspeakable sorrow and shame, fell only from her lips. Spite of herself, her thoughts were far away. Undoubtedly she was more disturbed than she had ever been in her life. It may be questioned, however, whether, a few days afterward, she was very circumstantial in her confessions on this head to Father Briffard.

Her last thoughts were given to the Jesuits; and the fear she felt lest she should see her aunt, her brother, and herself, a prey to their greed.

The last image which haunted her pillow, with strange entrancing sweetness, as she sank into that dreamy state in which the soul is no longer mistress of the will, and renders little account of what it thinks, or what it loves—was Verdelon!

Let us leave her sleeping in her loveliness—now troubled by the phantoms of the enemies of her house, now gladdened with holy visions of earliest love—and return again to the apartment, full of sombre relics of the Middle Ages, where the Seven hold their councils.

The subject discussed is the alarming act of the archbishop. The debate is no longer calm. No calculation now of what will accrue from orphan plunder. Nothing but one outburst of the deadliest spleen.

"If the cardinal is obstinate we shall have to hold our tongues," said the Provincial.

General indignation, in the midst of which a little note is brought by a livery servant, and put into the hands of the Provincial. It runs as follows:

"I am defeated, very reverend father, and

authorize you to erase from your dictionary the proverb, 'What woman wills, God wills.' I have made a great effort to give you a solid proof of my deep gratitude, but I have been compelled to bow to the unalterable decision of his eminence. However, your protégé will receive, at my request, a very advantageous appointment; so I rejoice in this concession, small as it is. You see the cardinal is not so very ill-natured after all.

"Remember me often in your prayers, for my good intentions; and be assured, reverend father, of the profound respect of your most devoted,
LEONORE DE MASLACQ."

"We can look after our protégé ourselves," said the Provincial; "it is our enemies we care about."

"That scape-grace," said Father Fournier, "will be eternally committing himself. Let us bide our time. Happily, the cardinal is not immortal; our Order is."

"This is my advice," chimed in Father Briffard. "Youth is self-sufficient and fond of flattery. We may be able to win over this secretary-general. He would suspect me, if his sister, whose confessor I am, has imprudently confided in him. But let us commission another of our body to see him frequently, with the view of gaining him to our side. We have this hold upon his recollection, that he is one of our pupils. We might dazzle his eyes with the prospect of a distinguished future, thanks to the patronage at our disposal in Rome and Paris. Let him be reminded of the favor which we at present enjoy at Court."

"Perhaps it would be as well," observed another, "to pay him the compliment of being present at his ordination."

"A good idea," said the Provincial. "I will go with ten others. We shall be observed, and he will be gratified with the kind attention."

"You will never win the young man over by any soft sawder," said Father Papillon, Julio's previous instructor in rhetoric. "I know him well: he is amiable, but very determined in his convictions, and will prove a formidable adversary. Watch him incessantly, and be ready to avail yourselves of the least imprudence on his part."

"Of course," said the Provincial. "That is our invariable plan. And do you, Father Courtois, who are charged with obtaining reports, enjoin upon your agents the most rigid scrutiny; not a deed, not a word of his should escape our knowledge."

And the council, fresh from the maturing of plans of vengeance and ruin, finished with a prayer!

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORDINATION.

HAD the Cardinal de Flammarens been commander of the troops he would have ordered

frequent parades. He was fond of show. In contrast to his venerable predecessor—a man so humble in his tastes and ways that he used to pass through the streets of T—— without being recognized, and considered his carriage as a disgrace to the successor of the Tiberias fishermen—this prelate had a brilliant equipage. His lackeys were bedizened with gold. He talked of horses like any other gentleman, and had a capital stud. With all his shrewdness he had failed to discover that he did not add to the dignity of his position by flattering the prefect and chief of the judges. So true it is that there are men who have not the tact to know how to condescend.

And yet, on the other hand, his disposition was thoroughly good. Living, as he did, in the midst of outward show, of hollow courtesies incessantly repeated, he still loved truth, was a man of unimpeachable character, and, though men abused him every day, had never had cause to reproach himself in a single instance with sully the honor and sanctity of the episcopate.

It has been already observed that he was no friend of the Jesuits, though the reason has not been stated. The truth was, he had detected them in a series of intrigues, which had roused the resentment of his loyal spirit. We may further add, that the excellent prelate (as the Marquise de Maslacq called him) had his spies as well as they; and had thus learned that the worthy fathers were in the habit of chuckling over his intimacy with the marchioness—a lady whose age and wide-established character placed her beyond suspicion.

"A set of miserable fellows," he would say.

His predecessors had been in the habit of holding ordinations four times a year, in the chapel of the Seminary, and hence in the presence only of a private circle and with closed doors. The cardinal introduced the custom of solemnizing them, in great state, in the cathedral of St. Stephen's.

That huge building was, by its awkward arrangement, the worry of his life. The nave, Roman in style, and the pointed Gothic choir, were not in the same straight line; and hence, what was going on in the latter could not be seen from the former, and was only heard amidst the sounds of chants and bells. Otherwise, the structure was one of the noblest in France, in architectural beauty and the richness of its cloister and stalls. To be enthroned in solitary grandeur in the choir, the admiration only of a few old canons and small singing-boys, shut out, meanwhile, from the gaze of the brilliant society of T——, who on every such occasion were accommodated in the nave, was gall and wormwood to the heart of this worthy man. Had he dared, he would have played the pontiff, on Easter Sunday, in the great square of St. Stephen's.

The ordinations were his supreme delight. He invested his part of the solemnity with a paternal dignity, and with all the warmth of his

disposition he appeared to exult in that episcopal function.

Julio's ordination took place, according to custom, on a Saturday. The crowd of sight-seers was unusually large. Every small occurrence is an event in a provincial town; and there was a general desire to witness a ceremony in which the new archiepiscopal secretary was to be set apart for the priesthood.

The service had not commenced when the Provincial and ten other fathers arrived to do honor to their old pupil, and took their seats, with well-affected humility, in the lowest stalls of the choir. It was the first appearance of the Jesuits on such an occasion.

While the cardinal, seated on his throne to the right of the choir, was being arrayed, according to custom, in his pontifical vestments, he said, in an under-tone to the vicar-general, who was robing him:

"Look! 'Apparent Jesuitæ nantes in gurgite vasto.'"

A suppressed smile was the only answer.

The ceremony was solemn and imposing. Julio attracted universal notice from his modest and distinguished air.

As soon as the prelate had pronounced his customary benediction and retired to the sacristy, the clergy assembled, as usual, to render their reverent homage. The newly-ordained priests were presented by the superior of the Sulpicians, and received each a cordial salute.

"This is M. l'Abbé Julio de la Clavière, your eminence," said the Sulpician, presenting Julio.

The cardinal regarded the young priest with evident affection, embraced him, and, taking his hand with easy friendliness, said:

"You will dine at the palace to-night."

At the same moment the Provincial approached. "Monseigneur," he remarked, "we are much gratified at having been present to-day at the ordination of one of our best and most esteemed pupils. There is no need to recommend him to your eminence. We can only add our testimony to that of the excellent heads of the seminary, in the hope that he will reflect as much credit on them as he did on us."

And he saluted the new secretary with a beaming smile.

"The hypocrite!" muttered the cardinal.

Julio received the greeting and acknowledged the Judas kiss with all the simple trust of his young heart. There are acts of baseness which upright natures are incapable of suspecting. For the moment, indeed, he blamed himself inwardly for suspecting the men who had just paid him such a marked compliment. But his new position was soon to bring him in contact with a world in which youthful artlessness rapidly disappears. In two days he was to enter upon his duties as archiepiscopal secretary.

During this scene, which would not have been out of place in the *Lettres Provinciales*, or in *Tartuffe*, Madame de la Clavière, support-

ed by Louise, left the church and returned home.

Seated side by side with some other relatives of the candidates, near the railings of the choir, they had been able to witness the entire ceremony. The imposing ritual had deeply impressed them, and they communicated their feelings to each other on seeing their beloved Julio consecrated to his office. Probably they were the only persons in T—— who had been ignorant of his rapid promotion. The famous Tournichon had not been near them for two days. Now that he had the will in his possession he deemed it no longer necessary to be as attentive as before. All that the cunning Jesuit had intended to do was to cherish the old lady's resolve on that head, and to secure it as far as possible by the aid of those terrors of conscience which he aroused. His business had been to urge Madame de la Clavière to save the soul of her husband by a pious restitution of the property he had left.

But there was another person present at the ordination. Verdalon, carried away by one of those ideas which, banished a thousand times, return as often to the mind, had determined to witness the solemnity. Yet what brought him there? He had witnessed so repeatedly those ceremonies which no longer appealed to his feelings or his heart, unless by recalling, in certain formularies which had lost their significance, the ancient grandeur of the priesthood, elected once by the clergy and congregation present, who were questioned within the church itself, as to the candidates offering themselves at the threshold of the sanctuary.

When Verdalon entered the building through one of the side doors in the Gothic portion of the edifice, all the places round the choir had been taken, so that it was impossible for him to go forward. Crowded up behind the door, and doomed to hear only organ and choristers—unable to see either his friend or the La Clavière ladies, whom he had often thought of since his conversation with Julio, and his taking the letter to Louise—he remembered that at T——, as every where in the South, money removes all obstacles. Slipping a franc into the hand of the Swiss, who was with difficulty keeping back the throng, he said in a low voice,

"Let me up into the top galleries of the choir."

The verger nodded significantly, and said, "Follow me, Sir." And then, as though he were escorting an official—"Make way there, if you please"—he quickly conducted him to a roughly built, dark spiral staircase, which led to the galleries: the old door closed behind.

Viewed from the top of the triforium—the archæological term for the galleries round the choir in great cathedrals—the scene below was so impressive that Verdalon himself, just escaped from all his day-dreams on the poetry of Catholic splendor, felt an involuntary sensation of awe.

By a singular chance no one else had asked

to be admitted there; so that, being quite alone, and commanding an entire view of the choir, altar, and throne, he was at liberty to choose his seat, and indulge to the full the gloomy satisfaction of witnessing, in their most sumptuous guise, the priestly solemnities in which he was never to take part.

His first glance was directed to Julio.

"Ah! he will make an excellent priest; I'm sure of that," he said to himself. "How glad I am I did not follow his example!"

And at that moment his attention was irresistibly drawn to a lady who seemed to him of exquisite beauty and most distinguished mien, seated behind the railing just in front of him.

"It's *Mademoiselle de la Clavière*!"

And the man—calm as he usually was, and thoroughly self-contained—was arrested at the sight. Leaning on the carved stone rail which adorned the triforium, he remained immovable, as though under some magnetic influence.

"A pretty thing for me to trouble myself about this Medieval ceremony!" said he. "Here is a psychological study for me which will not prove unpleasant. Thoroughly concealed myself, I can follow, in the features of that lovely and dignified girl, all the impressions produced in her soul by watching the brother she loves."

Evidently the study was attractive, though the watcher never suspected that it was dangerous. Accustomed once to see, even in the most beautiful women, nothing more than marvellous sculpture wrought by a divine hand, at the time when he had purposed the faithful surrender of himself to a celibate's life, he forgot that his new position as a man of the world—his own master—exposed him to feelings not quite so celestial, and might possibly kindle in the depths of his soul the first spark of those fiery passions to which every thing is sacrificed that might threaten to impede their progress.

So he fell into the snare which, in his old sense of security, he had for the moment ignored; and while thus abandoning himself to this charming soul-study, he drank like a child from the cup of the modest Circe, a fatal love, whose first beginnings, unsuspected, probably, till then, had commenced with his pleasant intimacy at *La Clavière*.

After imbibing so deeply of the delicious draught as to forget even the consecrated place where this strange love-scene had transpired, till the long file of priests wound up by the officiating cardinal in his glittering robes had disappeared behind the pillars at the sides of the choir, and all that was left of the solemnity was the smoke of the incense and the noise of the retiring throng, he awoke from his ecstasy like an enthusiastic artist who had forgotten the flight of time in the presence of the *Venus de Milo*. Descending the staircase as if he had been intoxicated, and scarcely able to guide his steps, he saw one being only in the world around him, to whom he felt that his whole soul had been united by an indissoluble and invisible bond.

For there had dawned on him the first day of the lover's anguish, in which the bitter and the sweet are alternate masters.

"Louise and her aunt," he murmured, "will be sure to go and see Julio in the seminary parlor."

So he betook himself to the *Rue du Taur*, wandering up and down like a spy or a criminal, and watching every one who entered the seminary from twelve to two, but without seeing Louise among them.

"I suspect they will have given Julio leave," he said, "to visit his aunt at once—contrary to the usual rule, which only allows the candidates leave of absence the day after their ordination."

Then it struck him that he might call on *Madame de la Clavière* and inquire after his friend; only at such a moment his visit would be undesirable. His presence would be a restraint upon the old lady and the two people who, at that time, constituted, in his eyes, the entire human race.

The best thing he could do was to go back to his retirement—more irksome to him now than the two whole years he had spent in the seminary. However, he consoled himself with golden dreams and schemes of future bliss. He would resume, in right earnest, the next day, those studies which he had abandoned when he first became an ecclesiastic. But a few months remained before he would have to undergo his licentiate's examination. He would work with feverish activity; he would become a brilliant advocate; he would acquire wealth and fame that he might lay them at the feet of the rich and beautiful heiress.

Ay, dream, children! dream of the glories of life—of the ineffable bliss of loving hearts! Dream away; it is the prerogative of youth. At all events, you will have enjoyed the delusions which your visions bring. Those who know of nothing but hard realities can dream with you no longer, and are driven, mayhap, to envy you your imaginary delights.

CHAPTER X.

A PRIVATE DINNER-PARTY AT THE PALACE.

JULIO, on his return to the seminary after his ordination, had asked permission from the superior to visit his aunt without delay.

"The rule is against you," said the good old man; "however, you are independent of us now, since the archbishop has attached you to his person; you may go. May all happiness attend you, my son," he added; "you have deserved your promotion by your real worth. But remember, yours is a very high position, and will have procured you jealous and dangerous enemies. You will require more than ordinary vigilance to detect the snares they will spread for you, and resist the secret attacks of their malice. Let your truest friends advise you. We are really attached to you; and though we

are not so vain as to credit ourselves with being the prime cause of your advancement, we rejoice, for all that, in the consciousness of having contributed to it. Your pleasant frankness, so precious in itself, will injure you seriously if you do not guard it very strictly. I know your life will be blameless; but your words, Julio, will be overheard, discussed, repeated. It is in that way that your enemies will seek to compass your ruin."

"But who may these enemies be?" asked Julio.

"Surely, my son, you must know that it is not our custom to reveal any thing that comes to our ears. You, who are about to take office yourself, must be conscious at starting that your honor requires you to maintain in all matters a confidential silence. At the same time, if you make careful note of what is passing around you, you will readily apprehend many things which charity and caution on our part alike forbid our communicating."

Julio was about to take his leave, when the superior, as though visited by some compunction for his own reserve, detained him for a moment.

"Stay, my son! you are so upright and so good that it may possibly be long ere you discover these snares. I would not say exactly that the Jesuits are your enemies; but be on your guard."

"A thousand thanks, father; I understand." And so they parted.

The superior's last words, which required no comment, were a new light to Julio.

"Just so; the Jesuits will be my enemies. I'm certain of that; and I stand alone, while they are a powerful body."

Full of this thought, he reached the house where his childhood had been so happily spent with his dear sister. A moment afterward he was in the embrace of his aunt and Louise.

The tidings of the cardinal's favor filled them with joy. Madame de la Clavière consoled herself with the thought that her talented Julio might look for rapid advancement, and would not miss the fortune she was surrendering to the Jesuits. To Louise only one fact was present, that it would be a long time before she would be called upon to bury herself in some retired curacy.

The archiepiscopal dinner was thoroughly select. The only persons present, besides Julio, were the cardinal himself; the Abbé Gaguel, the vicar-general, whom Julio had succeeded as secretary; Mademoiselle de Flammarens, the cardinal's sister; and Madame de Maslacq, her intimate friend.

It was a great distinction for Julio to be admitted to this circle; for it was one of the habits of the cardinal to secure, in a figurative sense, plenty of elbow-room; to abandon himself at table, in conformity with the best practical treatises on health, to the most thorough cheerfulness and unreserve, and hence to admit no stranger on such occasions in whose presence he might require continual caution. Knowing by

experience that the least acts of the great are watched, and their simplest words repeated, and having no fancy to be forever playing the priest, he used only to invite his distinguished clergy—canons, upper rectors, and others—to state banquets served with ceremony.

Mademoiselle de Flammarens was a hump-backed old maid, of a genial temperament, who ruled the Abbé Gaguel, who in his turn ruled the cardinal. To displease Mademoiselle de Flammarens, in a single instance, was to displease Gaguel, and that was fatal, inasmuch as he was the real bishop. The cardinal, whether in blind trust or from mere indifference, never interfered with his decisions.

On Julio's presenting himself at the palace, at the appointed hour, the valet conducted him to the archbishop's private study, where he was received with fatherly kindness.

"My dear abbé, you have not been personally known to me hitherto, but you are heartily welcome. You come to me with the best of all recommendations, for you have been sent by that gracious Providence that orders the affairs alike of cardinals and of the humblest of men. Understand that henceforth we are on terms of intimacy. We are going to dinner now: you will meet my sister, M. Gaguel, whom you know, and the Marchioness de Maslacq, my sister's old friend. At my table I am neither cardinal nor archbishop. I throw off all restraint as thoroughly as a charcoal-burner in his pit. Pray be equally at home, and look upon yourself as one of the family."

Julio was too much overcome by this affectionate address to be able to speak, but he took the cardinal's hand and kissed it reverently.

The cloth was laid in a small dining-room, at some distance from the cardinal's private apartments. One servant only, who was thoroughly reliable, was in attendance. The cardinal presented Julio to his sister and Madame de Maslacq. He had never been in better appetite or higher spirits. He even joked with Mademoiselle de Flammarens.

"You remember the day when you first introduced M. Gaguel to me?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"You were in luck then. Oh, ye ladies, what capital patronesses you are!"

"That doesn't apply in my case, monseigneur," said the marchioness; "you forget how unpleasantly you discarded my suit a few days ago."

"Ah, when you were bothering yourself about my friends the Jesuits. You espoused a bad cause, and so you lost it. That was your lookout. In M. Julio I have secured an honest man; had I listened to you, I should have got a spy in his stead; and this very night, whatever you and I might have said would be talked over by those worthy fathers in the Rue de l'Inquisition."

"Oh, the naughty man!" said Mademoiselle de Flammarens; "shocking for a bishop! What will M. Julio think of you, abusing the Jesuits?"

Now be it understood that this excellent lady shared to the full her brother's dislike to the Order; but whether from natural disposition, or to tease the archbishop and enliven the conversation, she thought fit to contradict him, and even to argue the point.

Nothing loth, the cardinal rushed on the attack, for he was never the man to shrink back from any contest, and, during the repast, carried on such a brilliant sparring with his mischievous antagonist, that she ended by going off into fits of laughter, after she had provoked him to some particularly outspoken expression of opinion, returning invariably to her favorite phrase, "Shocking for a bishop!"

"I could easily prove to M. Julio," said the archbishop, "that I am not wrong in any thing I have said, but thoroughly charitable."

"Yes, you form hasty opinions, mountains high, and call that being charitable. You are delicate in the terms you use."

"Not quite so hasty as you suppose. If the marchioness will tell you the singular mission she was charged with to me on the part of those worthy fathers, I will give the sequel."

"Oh, monseigneur, you're merciless; you would make me do penance. Don't press me, I beseech you, or M. Julio will look upon me as his enemy; and I call you to witness that at the time I came to you I was ignorant even of the name of your new secretary."

"Exactly: and now, my dear sister, here is what occurred."

And then, in a few graphic words, he described minutely his interview with the marchioness, when she urged him to set aside the Sulpician nominee in favor of the more eligible candidate put forward by the Jesuits.

"Just see, sister, how our friend is in league with these good people; and now ask M. Julio to describe to you the truly pathetic scene which took place after the ordination in the cathedral sacristy."

"Excuse me, your eminence; you tell a story too well to—"

"No, no; my sister would question my account. I want her to hear the thing from your mouth; she will never suspect you of exaggerating."

Julio was compelled to obey: so, with perfect simplicity, he related how affectionately the Provincial had embraced him in the presence of the cardinal and all the clergy.

"It is mere policy, monseigneur; nothing more. It is very natural that they should like to have about them willing instruments."

"You call that conduct policy, do you, mademoiselle? Now it's you who are delicate. In my dictionary there is another word for it—hypocrisy."

"Oh, oh! hypocrisy is too strong a term," replied the little old lady, anxious to draw out the cardinal; "you could not prove that."

"I should have thought the two incidents you have just heard enough. Do you wish for others?"

"Very much indeed," was the reply.

"What would you think, then, of these very men who embraced my poor young friend with such lavish tenderness, who congratulated themselves so warmly in having had him for a pupil, who recommended him to me, in case I required their testimony, when I tell you that they tried their utmost to stop his ordination?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Madame de Maslaq. "Some enemies of the Jesuits have misrepresented casual expressions of theirs. Positively these worthy fathers are abused so pertinaciously that it is almost enough to drive one over to their side."

"Marchioness, be careful. What if I showed you a letter instead of words?"

"Nothing easier," said Mademoiselle de Flammarcens. "There were those who even forged the handwriting of St. Francis de Sales that they might attribute a discreditable letter to his pen."

"I know that; but what if I showed you a letter written by the Provincial's own hand, and laid before me by the Superior of the Sulpicians? Would you go so far as to say that that exemplary priest had forged the handwriting of the Jesuit provincial?"

"By no means, monseigneur."

"Very well, ladies; then you shall be satisfied." And taking from his pocket a small pocket-book which he always carried about with him, he produced the celebrated letter of protest against Julio, and handed it gracefully to the marchioness.

"My dear abbé," he continued, "from tomorrow the entire business of the diocese will pass under your eyes; you will have to know every thing. Tell these ladies, then—since you, too, have been a theological student—whether or no I have calumniated the worthy fathers."

"I couldn't have believed it!" said the marchioness, in an under-tone.

"Just like you T—people," said the archbishop; "you are always rushing into extremes with your southern excitability. I make no doubt that there are some very tolerable men among the Jesuits—virtuous men and learned professors. In their body, as among the secular clergy, there start up, here and there, exceptional characters realizing the type of a perfect priest. But have the goodness to explain to me how it is that you exalt the entire body into profound scholars, first-class speakers, and unparalleled saints. Surely this is foolish. Now here, on the one hand, is an honest youth from the seminary, gifted with an easy delivery, a graceful style, and cultivated memory. I name him, say, curate of St. Sernin, or la Daurade, and you fine ladies won't deign to go and hear him. But let the same man, with precisely the same capacities, come from the chapel of the Inquisition, set up with the title of Reverend Father, and there is an immediate flare up of excitement in the town of T—. 'What talent, marchioness!' one will say. 'He is a second Father Ravignan!—Father Lacordaire is nothing to him!' And that you may all go and

hear him, you'll cram yourselves into a little chapel and hang delightedly on the periods that would have made you yawn had they come out of any one else's mouth. Bah! you're a set of simpletons, all of you!"

"Thank you for your compliment," said Mademoiselle de Flammarens.

"Monseigneur is not far from the truth," said the good marchioness. "So far as I am concerned, I must verily plead guilty."

"But after all, monseigneur" (for the old lady never addressed her brother in any other way), "whence comes the general impression that the Jesuits are so incomparably superior to all the other clergy in knowledge, ability, and moral excellences?"

"Merely from the circumstance that they have had the wisdom to cause this to be stated so often, for so long a time, and through so many lips, that now all the world believes it."

"That's easily said; but if it were not that their establishments exhibited, more than any other, the spirit of poverty, separation from the world, unqualified obedience, and purity of life, their name would never have been invested with such a halo."

"It is a mere hasty conclusion of yours that the Jesuits are holier and more obedient than the Carthusians, Benedictines, or Trappists. Their poverty! why, you're joking. Far be it from me to ridicule in your presence that vow of poverty, could it be really carried out by the higher orders of the clergy. But in houses of boundless wealth, where food is never lacking, where the cellars flow with wine, where, by skillful management, wood, oil, stores of all sorts, are laid up for many years; to call the men poor who, twice a day, as the bell sounds, sit down to a table piled with substantial food, is simply an abuse of words. The Jesuits, like the sisters of the *Sacré-Cœur* and others, make a vow of riches, not of poverty, from the day they first belong to their various societies."

"You shock us, monseigneur," said the little old lady.

"I shock you, do I? Now, look here. You were not born to-day any more than I was. You know the misery there is in the world. When I see an artisan climbing the steps of the parish church with a young woman on his arm whom he has just married, I say to myself, 'Now there's a man who has made a vow of poverty.' And should that same artisan, who is scared by the toil and trouble of housekeeping, who has sometimes been surrounded in his domestic ties with the worries of a life too often full of fear lest the morrow's bread should fail—should he take upon him monastic vows, he pledges himself to be rich; for he is well assured that he will never want again. Need I add more? The fact is, we flatter ourselves with lies in our grand old Catholic Church. And that is the simple reason why the world cuts us."

"All this is very undeniable, dear monseigneur."

"It is indeed, marchioness: but that in your

ears. I take good care not to say it on the housetops, or I should be stoned to death. You would see me in a nice position, cardinal though I am, Archbishop of T—, and Senator of the Empire, if I busied myself with lifting the veil from these deceits in which we are trained after the manner of the good old days. Marchioness, I shall be seventy in a few months, all hale and strong though I seem to be. So my time can not be very long now, and I would fain die in peace with the Society of St. Ignatius and all the other fraternities of my diocese. But, while doing full justice to much private worth among them, which compels admiration, they would, in my judgment, be infinitely raised in tone if they were called upon to face the rude shocks of life. I know all that can be urged on the other side; and I pray God—for the good of our Catholic faith, I do assure you—that a wiser spirit, a quicker perception of the sublime truths of our religion, may speedily descend upon the Church, sweeping away old or incompetent institutions, and restoring to us true poverty, true purity of morals, true obedience around the family hearth—that sanctuary where primitive Christianity erected the Church, and whence we have expelled it, in driving thence to the cloister those pure and trustful spirits which otherwise might have hallowed it with the love of God."

"Why, monseigneur, you are becoming quite a philosopher in your old age."

"Indeed I am, if you call this philosophy; for I acknowledge I have not always thought as I do now. Once I was under the influence of those ideas which are most popular with the clergy. I just did as others did, fortunately for me; for most unquestionably I should never have been a cardinal had not my ignorance cast me into that wide stream, where I spoke and acted like the rest of us. My dear abbé, these same thoughts are in young heads as well as under my white hairs. I know what I'm about. I haven't selected you with my eyes shut. My little finger told me that your ideas, also, were in advance of the time. Before these ladies we may say what we choose. Elsewhere, you must be cautious. Otherwise, with all my power, I couldn't shelter you."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL CORRESPONDENCE.

THE painful disclosures of the cardinal—that disgraceful protest which aimed at nothing short of preventing Julio's ordination, the baseness of the men who fawned upon him at the moment when they found that they had no power to annihilate him—inspired him rather with disgust than hatred.

"We can afford to forgive them," he said to himself. "Are they not punished enough by their hateful system of compassing their end by any means within their reach? What a life they

must lead! How they must battle with their conscience before they can persuade themselves to promote the prosperity and greatness of their order by measures which the commonest honesty would not tolerate in the conduct of private affairs! See what speculative errors lead to! Take these men, one by one, and you would find among them real worth, relative excellences, a desire to do good, and almost invariably blameless conduct. Study the social mechanism which unites them, which urges their conduct, promotes the development of their society, and guarantees its influence, and you have a gigantic construction, a hateful system of Machiavelism, dismaying you by the terrible machinations which it sets in motion all over the globe. Itself a simple society, whose sum total of members barely exceeds 3000—the question arises, how is it that this little flock has attained to such heights of power? and the simple answer is, because they have the unity and zeal of secret associations. The more public opinion attacks them, the more partial expulsions worry them, the more power does the persecution bring to them. They are like the Condottieri before the world that proscribed them—victory or submission.

“Lamennais used to say, ‘The opinion which I have formed of this body is more or less independent of the character or ability of individual members. It is founded on the original idea with which the society was started, and with results which that idea has necessarily developed. The constitution of the order appears to me to be vicious in principle, and the order itself to be rather injurious than beneficial to the Church’s interests, even after the balance has been fairly struck between the good and evil which enter into its economy. There is something in it utterly unnatural, and at variance with the real spirit of Christianity.’ This is sentence of death against them. His eminence thinks so, too. The Sulpicians are afraid of them, and are silent in their presence for fear of exposing themselves to their implacable vengeance. By what unhappy misfortune am I marked out as one of their victims? Of course they want my wretched fortune. Let them take it. I have money enough. For that matter I would go and say to them, ‘Here, greedy fellows, here’s half a million. Don’t torment me in my insignificance. Spare the two lawful heirs of the property you have coveted.’ Ah, I see how it will be: we shall have a terrible fight; but, after all, I have not begun it.—They are the aggressors. I have right on my side, and the right is what God defends. It is a glorious thing to face such an adversary. So I will be brave and true.”

At that moment the cardinal called him: it was his usual hour for shutting himself up with his secretary for the dispatch of business.

“I want to put you in train with your daily work, my dear abbé,” he said. “It is often tedious—sometimes embarrassing—never very long or very laborious. Mine is one of the largest dioceses in France, and I have the reputation of being one of the best business men

known. To that I owe my purple. To be plain with you, I had rather my promotion had come from some good deed, such as God might take knowledge of, or the writing of some important work which might lead posterity to honor me. Four hours a day is enough to accomplish the day’s task, if we keep our papers in proper order. See, now, let us get to work. All we have to do is to arrange the correspondence, settle the replies one after the other, and afterward read the reports from the courts and the prefecture. Here is the messenger—open the letters.”

And Julio began to read.

“M. Dunel, curate of St. Béat, begs to inform your eminence of the desire he has had for a long time to join a religious order. He fears he is doing but little good in the position where your eminence has placed him; and thinks it would be more acceptable to God if he entered a monastery.”

“I am constantly getting letters of that kind, which mean, in plain words, ‘I am sick of not being made a vicar; or of having too small a living; and want promotion.’ Now for my answer.”

“His eminence has no power to prevent any of his clergy from entering a religious order. Greatly regretting the loss of his services, he allows M. l’Abbé Dunel to choose his own path.”

“Out of twenty priests who make this pretty little proposition to me every year, there are not two that enter the cloister. Their only motive is ambition—nothing more.”

“The vicar of Luchon writes to you, to tell you of the frivolous conduct of M. Lemant, vicar of Luzet. This young priest is neither grave nor consistent: he is familiar, beyond all bounds, with the people of his village. Moreover, he has taken to rhyming; and has alienated, by his injudicious epigrams, the mayor, the schoolmaster, and some of his brethren round him.”

“Reply that his eminence will take the matter into his consideration; and thank him for his obliging information. Then write to the vicar of St. Mamet, near Luchon, and charge him, in the name of his eminence, to institute an inquiry into the conduct of the vicar of Luzet, and to take all possible care to prevent either the parishioners or the vicar himself from doubting the confidential mission with which he is intrusted. I suspect the vicar of Luchon—a worthy man in other respects—has a little exaggerated.”

“Madame de St. Martory prays your eminence to authorize her to obtain some sisters of mercy, to take care of the sick and poor in the large market-town near her château.”

“Put that letter aside: we must be civil to the ladies. They are fond of autographs; so I’ll answer her myself.”

“An application from the vicar of Salies for authority to consecrate an altar.”

“Put it into an envelope, and write underneath, ‘Fiat ut petitur.’”

“A letter from the mayor of Rieux, full of complaints against the vicar, who is in the habit of denouncing him from the pulpit, with little

attempt at disguise; and has also traduced him to the schoolmaster and the clergy round."

"Write to the vicar that his eminence recommends the greatest caution with the mayor. That possibly that functionary may bear him some ill-will; that his eminence is not disposed to enter into the question of their mutual differences, but that he urgently entreats the vicar to make every sacrifice in the interests of peace—unless, indeed, he is willing to take another benefice, in which case his eminence will place one at his disposal at the very earliest vacancy. Tell him, also, that his eminence ever feels toward him the liveliest interest. He is a good priest at the bottom, but rather sensitive and mischief-making."

"A letter from Mdlle. Louise Girot, school-mistress of Aurignac. She complains bitterly of the vicar, who was at first most energetic with reference to her school, and most attentive to herself, but who now slanders her every where, is trying to rob her of her pupils, and tells every body that he will soon drive her out of the place."

"Either she's jealous or he's vindictive; moreover, I think there is something wrong at the bottom of it. Write to her that his eminence will take her letter into consideration. Write to the vicar that his eminence wishes for an explanation of his conduct to Mdlle. Girot."

"The vicar of Monteil asks permission to leave his parish for three weeks, and to delegate his duties to the vicar of Fignan, his neighbor, during his absence."

"Fiat ut petitur."

"An inclosure, containing dispensation money."

"Enter it in the account-book."

"The curate of Loubens requests your eminence to inform him whether he ought to give Christian burial to M. Nadaud, who died without the sacraments, and was notorious for his impiety. M. Nadaud never entered the church, was in the habit of abusing priests, and used to read the *Siccle*."

"Reply that his eminence authorizes the vicar to accord Christian burial to the late M. Nadaud. Blockheads, they are always trying to get into scrapes!"

"The vicar of Scaldlens would be most thankful if his eminence would do him the honor of coming to consecrate the new cemetery of the parish."

"Say that his eminence is overwhelmed with business, and will send one of his vicars-general. Assure him of my warmest regard. I'll spare him the trouble of entertaining his archbishop."

"That's the last, your eminence."

"All right; now read the reports."

"Here is the one from the courts of justice: it merely intimates the flight of the vicar of St. Frajou."

"We know that already. Now read the one from the central police."

"Constant complaints are being made of one of the brothers connected with the schools in the

parish of S—. Evidence has been received on the subject. A strict inquiry is to be instituted."

"Oh, those wretched brothers! always the same story. There are some good lads among them; but taking them all in all, they are a heap of coarse, rough natures. Go on."

"The Jesuits are bargaining for an extensive site to build a large institution. They are constantly stirring in the town and getting hold of large sums of money. They work upon the old and the soft-headed, persuading them to give them donations. MM. Tournichon, Marquet, and Legros are named as their agents."

"H'm! I know a great deal more about that matter than the commissary of police."

"A mendicant friar—who calls himself Génovéfin—dressed in a monastic garb, has been brought before the central commissary; on exhibiting his papers they were found to be correct, and the permission of his superior was given him to beg in all the dioceses. However, it was ascertained through the telegraph that no one of that name had been so commissioned in the city of Lyons. He has just been arrested, and will be sent back to the Imperial procurator to-morrow."

"A new branch of industry. Any thing more?"

"No, your eminence."

"Very well, my dear abbé; then, saving only the necessary variety in details, see your daily work. A fine ecclesiastical establishment, this of ours—isn't it? There have been no heavy cases to deliberate about to-day; it is in these I expect to test your theology. We have queer ones every now and then. And now get on with your replies, and come to breakfast with a good appetite."

CHAPTER XII.

JULIO'S FIRST SERMON.

A WEEK had not passed from the time of Julio's installation as secretary-general of the archbishopric before that promotion was a subject of general criticism among the clergy.

The Jesuits had taken good care to adopt a watchword on the occasion, and this watchword, circulated as a countersign from the highest to the humblest abodes, was—"The poor cardinal is failing evidently—he trusts the secretary's office to a boy."

The elder clergy were of opinion that the whole affair passed their comprehension; that, in point of fact, the juniors were uppermost.

The candidates for this apparently unimportant post, which was almost always the stepping-stone to a vicar-generalship, and often to a bishopric, vowed vengeance on Julio in their disappointment, and predicted his speedy downfall.

Jealousy is as keen after his rival's disgrace as beasts of prey after carrion.

Of course all this was said in the dark—in

strictly private circles. Openly, and especially before any one belonging to the archbishop or his court, all the talk was of the merits, modesty, and distinguished manners of the new secretary.

The archpriest of St. Stephen's—a man of very moderate talents but considerable shrewdness, who had greatly aided the cause of the Viscount de Baziège at the late elections, as being intimate with ministers and having promised him a bishopric—found occasion, in the appointment of Julio, for flattering the cardinal. Knowing as he did that the least opposition on his part would overthrow his ambitious schemes, it became a matter to him of the first importance to gain him over. "If you can get a letter from the archbishop addressed to the minister," M. de Baziège had said, "it will materially aid us." So he called at the palace, after the cardinal's breakfast, at an hour when experience had taught him that his eminence, fortified by his meal, and having made merry with his sister and secretary, was in a charming humor, and perfectly accessible.

"Your eminence," he said, with his sweetest smile and lowest obeisance, "I should be sorry to be the last to congratulate you on your recent promotion of the Abbé Julio. My excellent friend, the superior of the seminary, has spoken of him to me in terms of special esteem. He observed what great tact and knowledge of men your eminence has exhibited in this matter. His rare qualities and brilliant powers are much talked of; indeed, the superior thinks that he will prove a most distinguished preacher. So I have come to ask—and I trust your eminence will not refuse—that M. Julio would give us a sermon in the metropolitan cathedral, on the occasion of celebrating the anniversary of the dedication of the churches."

"You're a flatterer," said the archbishop to himself, when he had listened to the harangue of the archpriest; "you want to make money out of Julio's advancement. However, Providence has a use for fools as well as for other people. (*Aloud*)—Mr. Archpriest, I can't do better than refer you to M. Julio. See him for yourself. I must say, however, that you have given him no easy task—it only wants a fortnight to the day in question."

"These young priests, your eminence, have powerful imaginations and retentive memories; besides, M. Julio ought to have been ready to preach for a long time."

"Quite so. I place him at your service; settle it between yourselves."

And he bowed him out.

Julio responded at first by a flat refusal to the adulatory and well-worded request of the archpriest. His objections, he said, were powerful. He had never mounted the pulpit except in the presence of his fellow-students; and his only sermons had been those immature essays of his youth from which it was utterly impossible to argue future success.

The archpriest urged him still further:

"God will assist you: you must begin some time or other; as well now as on any future occasion."

He pleaded so earnestly and so well that Julio yielded to his importunity; and influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by that yearning of brilliant intellects to find play on a grand occasion, promised the much-wished-for sermon.

"You will have a most feeble extempore address; but that's your look-out. I have neither inclination nor patience to write sermons; so, if I break down, you must not blow me up."

"I positively glory in extempore preaching," replied the archpriest: and he forthwith invited Julio to dine with him the evening of the Sunday on which he was to preach.

Whether the young man favored his audience with a series of platitudes or with a magnificent oration mattered little to the ambitious ecclesiastic. But Julio, fêted, caressed by him, receiving an invitation to a state dinner given in his honor, at which the master of the house would assign to him the first place of distinction, and shower upon him every possible attention—how could he possibly refuse to speak to the cardinal on that most important affair, with reference to which a few lines from the cardinal would be enough, after the exertions of M. de Baziège. Every thing looked promising. The enthusiastic archpriest, parodying doubtless M. Prud'homme, said to himself, as he crossed the Place de St. Étienne, "This sermon, ah! this sermon; it will be the happiest day of my life!"

Full of the idea that his plan was flourishing, and that in winning Julio over he had secured the coveted letter from the cardinal to the minister, he made all his arrangements with consummate ability. Having issued invitations to several distinguished barristers and professors of T—, he secured the services of a well-known journalist, who was to report the young orator's discourse, and so publish his fame to the world. Proceeding to ascertain the names of Julio's more intimate friends, he could scarcely fail to procure the name of Verdalon, who had just quitted the priesthood for the bar—a career which he had previously adopted. Fortunately enough, the archpriest had seen him two or three times at the house of an old lady, a mutual friend. Having learned that on a certain day Verdalon was to spend the evening there, he contrived to meet him, and so arranged matters as to have a long and intimate conversation with Julio's friend.

The result of this cordial intercourse was that the archpriest, after having duly rung the changes on the gamut of Julio's praises, tendered to Verdalon the following invitation:

"You would do me a great favor if you would dine with me next Sunday, to meet M. Julio and a few intimate friends."

Verdalon, who had not ventured to call on his friend at the palace, deterred by a feeling of delicacy and reserve, perhaps a little overwrought, consented most readily.

All possible publicity was given to the fact of the forthcoming sermon. The archpriest, with a view of stimulating more effectually the general curiosity, had told every one, in strictest confidence, of course, that M. Julio would preach extempore. So the bill of fare which was offered was made enticing in the extreme. The first sermon of a young priest, the cardinal's favorite—to be delivered without a manuscript—what more could be wanted, in a provincial town, to invest the occasion with all the interest of a great event?

What follows will by many be held to be an exaggeration; not, however, by those of our readers who are conversant with southern habits. From five o'clock in the morning—at which hour the doors of the old church were thrown open—commenced the struggle in the nave for the most eligible places between the clerical bench and the pulpit. The more distinguished people sent their servants to mount guard, for two hours at a time, over these privileged seats, and though the sermon was not to be delivered till vespers, at three p.m., scarcely was the noon-day service over before carriages from all parts of the town were to be seen driving up. Ladies, richly dressed, fought their way into the centre of the nave; gentlemen, in evening costume, as though attending an official ceremony, occupied all the unreserved space. And when the cardinal, preceded by his clergy, took his place in the clerical seat to hear the sermon, it became necessary to push back, as courteously as possible, the dense crowd excited to the highest pitch of feverish impatience.

Soon there was a dead silence and thrilling suspense. The young priest, having knelt for a moment in the pulpit, rose. He did not cast around him that look of lofty patronage affected sometimes by ordinary preachers; nor did he move to his audience with a consequential air; no, nor even spread out on the ledge of the pulpit a handkerchief of dazzling whiteness, designed to remove the forthcoming perspiration of the preacher after his most pathetic periods; but having simply asked the episcopal benediction, raising his eyes modestly, with a truthful and dignified look, he commenced his discourse.

Alluding, in his opening sentences, to his extreme youth and inexperience, he apologized for preaching before his eminence, before a clergy so renowned for learning and intelligence, on a subject which demanded the vigorous thought of a man of mature age, and the protracted studies of those who had grown old in the priesthood. But the occasion on which he was appointed to discharge, for the first time, the grand and awful ministry of the Apostolate decided his theme.

Since they were assembled to commemorate the anniversary of the consecration of material churches, he would speak, he said, of the Church invisible—her glories in the past, her struggles in the present, her hopes for the future.

So far his voice had been slightly tremulous, but perfectly clear: at times sweet and sonorous, and penetrating easily to the remotest ex-

tremitry of the vast nave of the cathedral. His hearers were already fascinated—a fascination which arose from the contrast of his youth with language which, in three paragraphs of extreme simplicity, guaranteed for the rest of the discourse the utmost freshness of thought and marvellous gracefulness of style. Quoting the great name of Bossuet in his support, he established that position so rarely taken up in the pulpit, that the cradle of the Church was not to be found in that limited arena printed by the feet of the Holy One during his life on earth; nor yet in the gloom of the Catacombs that sheltered the Christians from the terrors of martyrdom; that the Church was believing humanity itself, from the days of Adam, Abel, Seth, and the patriarchs, who had all been her pontiffs and sacrificing priests.

He exhibited her great and mighty, in proportion as she had preserved that primitive spirit of brotherhood and freedom from every species of enslavement, by which she had achieved her magnificent triumph over the pompous but fruitless religions of the ancient world.

"Church of the Highest!" he exclaimed, "that was the day of thy real splendor. Not thine was it then to bedizen thyself with perishable glory. Thou didst abandon the gold of the earth to the statues of Olympian Jove; the marble chiseled by hands which genius had inspired, to the Venus of Cyprus; the bronze, wrought with marvellous skill, to the Parthenon, which pagan Rome had erected in honor of every deity that the poets had created. Thine were no vast parades, in company with the great ones of the world; in processions, such as those of the Panathenæa, which Demosthenes rebuked as costing more to the Athenian treasury than all the fleets ever manned for rescue from the might of the ambitious Macedonian monarch. No prelates, priests, or deacons of thine (servants of the needy) arrayed themselves then in costly attire, rivaling in its magnificence the robes of senators, or royal apparellings of silk and gold. Thou didst spurn the splendor of temples erected from the quarries of Paros or Pentelicus, and wrought by the hands of Phidias or Praxiteles. No need was there for the wide domains, such as the pagan priesthood had secured; grasping, through the superstitious credulity of the nations, the wealth of age after age, that they might revel in indolence and debauch. Thine altar was unsullied then, for faith and holiness alone ascended there. All drew near, for all were blameless and believing. No preaching then the subtleties of extravagant mysticism; the message was, 'Brethren, love one another.' Self-love took the form of self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice is the imitation of Christ, who died for us; and to imitate Christ is to secure a better country. This was the message learned, and nothing more. All thy priests were poor, and dispensers to the poor of the Church's common stock. Thy temples were those lowly basilicas, of which modern Rome still retains some precious traces. Vast halls which served for protection from the sun

and against the cold, but where Christians gathered, themselves the living temples of God, sheltered beneath these sanctuaries of earth, the halloved home of the Christian family.

"Church of the Highest, when I would fain love thee well; when I would fain forget thy humiliation and sufferings; when I would fain conjure up the ideal, which it should be thine yet to realize, at the peril of being hereafter but an ancient memory in the history of man—I gaze at thee as thou wast before the evil days, when the fatal glories of earth abated gradually thy earliest love, and relaxed thine energy, and enfeebled thy very life. I recall thee in the time before Constantine, the first Christian Cæsar, had bestowed on thee with the gift of liberty the might of an arm of flesh, by the aid of which, through the long after-ages, thou hast sought too eagerly a visible sway, while the nations threatened thee with a return to their old superstition, or an espousal of new creeds. Church of the Highest! behold what thou wast in the glory of thy golden age. Behold what thou shalt yet again become in the day when thou shalt be willing to reassert over a worn-out world, which sees nothing in thee now but humiliation and indifference; that imperishable influence acquired only in the glorious path of self-denial, devotion, and sacrifice. Thou art called upon to climb again the hill of Calvary, to plunge again into the gloom of the Catacombs.

"If not, thou shalt live on, as paganism has lived on, denuded of popular veneration, and thou shalt die its death of imbecility and age, in the presence of generations who will work out for themselves another faith—were it not for the promise bequeathed thee by thy Divine founder of a spirit of resurrection and newness of life, and the destiny yet, by the recovery of thine ancient energy, to guide through the ages to come generations which shall live gloriously hereafter."

Then he set forth the actual position of the Church, weakening herself by inane repetitions of the less creditable and prosperous periods of her history, with so vast a knowledge of the requirements of modern society, and of the utter fallacy of meeting its demand for vital activity with an interminable ritual, the symbolism and poetry of which were retained no longer, that the upturned sea of countenances shone as with a sudden illumination, and amidst the intense silence a deep joy broke forth, attesting the general sympathy in the revelation of these hitherto unseen truths.

Finally, he proved, by most lucid and practical arguments, that the Church's future depended on herself; that her power was, in fact, slumbering in the midst of a crisis, in which she was halting between the brilliant visions of the past, concealing the truth that the old faith was dead, while its counterfeit glittered before her eyes, and the uncertain prospects of a future, whose new systems had not as yet been organized with sufficient exactness.

"Your eminence and sirs," he said, in con-

clusion, "I am but a young man in your presence, whom God has not intrusted with the prophet's gift of unveiling what is yet to be. But, like a youthful Daniel, I would venture to warn the old men and the wise of my people, that it should be theirs to think of this coming time, to prepare for it, to anticipate its blessings. How many hesitating spirits there are whom unbelief enslaves, who are wearing out their energies in fatal skepticism; who could yet endure the sorrowful present, had they but the hopes of a less cheerless religious future.

"If I have benefited but one candid spirit in this assembly; if I have, in the very faintest degree, lifted the veil from the future, the better to exhibit the imperishable Church blooming in the midst of a now social world, marching by the conqueror's path to a wondrous inheritance, of which our fathers reeked not; if I have induced but one poor child of the present, hungering and thirsting after the truth of God, to realize that the Christian Church—the depository of that faith and love without which there can be no life, either for mind or soul—carries with her still all the moral and spiritual destinies of the world, I shall leave this pulpit joyfully, thanking God that I have been permitted, by His grace, to kindle in a single mind one feeble ray of His eternal truth."

Julio bowed his head; the most reverend cardinal archbishop gave his blessing with earnest solemnity; the congregation, deeply impressed, dispersed in silence.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARCHPRIEST'S DINNER.

JULIO's bold and glorious sermon had lasted more than an hour. Exhausted by the double effort which had called forth all the physical and intellectual faculties in the exercise of that wondrous fascination, he retired to a private vestry. There he could overhear the animated discussions of the venerable members of the chapter. The astute archpriest having calculated on Julio's triumph, was already prepared for it. The dean of the chapter and three other canons were his intimate friends: in addition to those, he had secured, for the execution of his purpose, two other votes; so that he might safely reckon on a majority. Before the cardinal had crossed, with slow and stately step, from the choir to the sacristy, and laid aside his pontifical robes, the dean, in conformity with the archpriest's preconcerted arrangement, proposed to the chapter to petition his eminence to confer on the young secretary-general the rank of honorary canon of the metropolitan cathedral. The archpriest, and those of his colleagues whom he had won over to his side, supported the motion with great eagerness.

A solitary voice protested.

"You are encouraging most objectionable teaching. What was there in this sermon be-

yond a collection of wild ideas of most questionable orthodoxy—an ignoring of all the prescribed rules of preaching—no division of the subject—no invocation of the aid of the Virgin Mother, together with that of the Holy Spirit.”

“And yet I fancy it was not so ill-inspired after all,” said the archpriest, slyly.

The dean, on collecting the votes, found himself in a large majority; and the cardinal appearing at that moment, the chapter approached him in a body, with a request that he would designate the Abbé Julio honorary canon.

The archbishop was fairly taken by surprise. He comprehended at once the whole drift of the proposition; it involved a brilliant sanction of the choice he had made in the person of his new secretary, and a public rebuff of the Jesuit clique. However, he disguised his satisfaction as carefully as possible.

“The Abbé Julio is very young,” he said to the canons. “This sermon of his is but a trial; and an extempore discourse is always liable to many imperfections, perhaps even inaccuracies, which are undesirable in the pulpit, and which a rigid critic might point out. But then, we must remember, there are many things in his favor; and since the venerable metropolitan chapter extends its favor to him in so gratifying a manner, I should be very ungracious did I decline to associate myself with him in this matter, or refuse a favor which will tend greatly to encourage him. So I nominate M. Julio de la Clavière honorary canon of the cathedral.

The archpriest knocked at the door of Julio’s vestry, anxious to be the first to announce to him the new dignity to which, thanks to the chapter, he had been raised; and as soon as the cardinal had retired, the canons came in a body to congratulate their new brother.

At the same time it had been arranged that Julio should not leave the house of the archpriest that evening without being informed, in the course of conversation, by one of the guests, to whom he was indebted for this last act of grace. There were also other surprises in store for him. The archpriest’s dinner was magnificently served. The names of the guests, written on exquisite pieces of glazed azure-tinted paper, were carefully placed on the table-cover of the rarest and most exquisite damask. Julio’s was in the seat of honor, and the archpriest did not fail to say, with a loud voice, as he motioned him to his place, “The Abbé Julio de la Clavière, honorary canon, secretary-general of the diocese.”

The guests were almost all men of note. Each of them had been present at the sermon, which was just then in every one’s mouth. The conversation was cheerful and brilliant. Had Julio been vain, he would have been upset with the flattery heaped upon him by that select circle in the most refined and felicitous terms; a peculiar gift this of French talent, which can offer to intellect or beauty the incense of adulation without ignoring the claims of modesty.

The first course had not been removed before

a servant handed to the archpriest, on a silver salver, the journal of T——.

“Gentlemen,” said the archpriest, “excuse my rudeness, but I can not resist my curiosity. I am anxious to see if the newspaper makes any allusion to the noble sermon we heard to-day.”

And running his eye rapidly over the first columns of the sheet he found a paragraph on the subject.

“Exactly, gentlemen. Allow me to read you this extract.”

A general assent. The article was in the following terms:

“The town of T—— has just had one of those treats which are now, unhappily, very rare. An orator of the highest order discovered himself this afternoon, for the first time, in St. Stephen’s Church. A very young priest, the Abbé de la Clavière, secretary-general to the archbishop, has exhibited, in an extempore discourse, which lasted an hour and electrified the audience, ability of so extraordinary a character as to make us proud of a country which has already furnished the bar with such eminent speakers. There is but one opinion as to the merit of the sermon, and the vigor with which it broached certain theories uppermost at present in the intelligent religious mind. Any exceptions to the all but universal homage of the town must be sought in the narrow-minded ranks of those who are bent on cramping modern society with the effete and restricted traditions of the Middle Ages. Such persons will possibly regard the reverend gentleman as an eccentric preacher, or even as an innovator. But men of the world, who would prefer seeing the clergy take those new paths of oratory opened up to them by Lacordaire, will applaud an eloquence from which Catholicism might reap incalculable advantages could it but get rid of those old ideas which the present age, whether rightly or wrongly, can only regard with aversion.

“Just as we were going to press we received a letter from one of the friends of M. Julio, informing us that his eminence, at the urgent request of the chapter of St. Stephen’s, has appointed the young orator to an honorary canonry. The communication finishes with these words, to which we heartily subscribe:

“‘The entire town of T—— will be gratified at this just homage rendered by the cardinal to such distinguished talent.’

“The article is signed by M. Meland, principal editor of the journal, whom I have the honor of seeing among my guests.”

“Gentlemen, M. Julio’s friend, who addressed this letter to us, is the archpriest,” said M. Meland, aloud.

“See how I am betrayed!” said the archpriest, laughing. “You journalists are the most indiscreet men in the world.”

“And far too complimentary to me,” observed Julio. “I am at a loss how to express my gratitude.”

"By giving us another display of your talent," said M. Meland.

The conversation now became more animated than ever. Verdelon, seated at a little distance from Julio, who had welcomed him warmly on meeting him, and chided him in a friendly manner for not paying a visit to the palace, led the way to a discussion of the religious questions which were occupying their thoughts.

The resolve of the Jesuits to build an edifice was well known at T——; and people naturally asked where the money was to come from. The inquisitive tittle-tattle of provincial towns likes nothing better than discussing and snapping at every thing.

"Look to your prospective fortunes," said one.

"I must be off to see after my great-uncle," observed another.

"My old step-mother had some diamonds once," remarked a third; "but now, whenever I inquire after them, she blushes. I should very much like to know where those said diamonds are gone."

The skirmishers having finished, the real attack began.

"The Jesuits are doomed," said M. Dupeyrat, a distinguished advocate of T——. "They are triumphing now under the present Government, and that very Government will be their death. The victory they have achieved over the university, and, consequently, over the secular clergy, will cost them their existence. There are among them elements of deadliest animosity, which will be crushed out by the strong hand that grasps the power of France. Meanwhile new interests arising from inevitable struggles may issue in political antagonisms; and if so, the explosion of these elements will be attended with terrible results. Their triumphs even, attested by their costly establishments, erected in every direction, will help to bring about this crisis. I give them twenty years more of corporate existence in France."

Meanwhile the drawing-room was filling with invited guests. All the numerous acquaintances of the archpriest were eager to avail themselves of the opportunity of a personal interview with the hero of the day, whom the newspaper, a great authority in provincial eyes, had designated as a rival and successor to Lacordaire.

The conversation was resumed. M. Meland asked Julio what he thought of the internal economy of the Jesuits.

"Have they, as it is stated, a special oath—a peculiar rite to which only their highest officers are admitted, and the secret of which is confided only to them? I questioned it for a long time; but an expression of Lamennais, at the time when he was an earnest Ultramontanist, and, consequently, a most partial witness, rendering as it does full justice to the individual merits of these men, has given me much to think about. If my memory serve me, this is the passage: 'There is a secret among them;

and when it is known few care to be charged with it.' He even quotes, in the same text, the Latin saying:

'Jura per jura secretum perdere noli.'

How are we to believe that so thoughtful a writer, who must have had such accurate knowledge of the society's constitution, would have spoken thus in strictest confidence if there were nothing peculiar in the order?"

"I have been as much struck as yourself by that expression of the illustrious author to whom you refer," answered Julio; "I do not think, however, that there are the same processes of initiation among the Jesuits as in secret societies. Listen to what I was told once by a priest, a friend of my own, who belonged to them at one time, but who became so sick of the double-dealing which is inherent in their system of espionage that he left them:

"Those only who occupy the highest places among them have any thing to do with the direction of their spiritual and temporal affairs. The inferior members know nothing more about them than the general public. All that is known is that there exists at their head a mighty organization, a terrible and tremendous machinery of wheels within wheels in which is displayed the real power of the General himself. The moral force of this system resides in the celebrated axiom, indicative of its thorough essence, '*perinde ac cadaver*'—passive obedience, little short of veneration for an order received from a superior—as though it were the revealed will of God. Every Jesuit is unquestionably a submissive agent, ready to set out any moment as professor in a college, preacher in a cathedral, missionary in a village or among savages in foreign lands. To speak correctly, he is not a Jesuit; he is a priest like others, held to the commands of the ruling body. Their administration resembles that of the Venetian Republic. 'At its head is an oligarchy, whose members compose a senate of Jesuits, properly so called, to whom all the other members render blind allegiance—a mere herd, whose only function is obedience.' 'Among us,' said my friend, 'the individual Jesuit is welcome to his own opinions. He may be an absolutist, a democrat, a Gallican, or an ultramontane; the society does not trouble itself on this head. It has its own views, which it keeps to itself and never communicates. These it carries out by means of its various voluntary agents, who are merely required to obey.'

"Hence you see that it is incorrect to say there is any special secret among them. They have, indeed, an administration whose plans are never revealed, and tend to but one aim—the elevation of the order, no matter what the methods of its accomplishment. This, I apprehend, sums up the mystery in the Jesuit oligarchy.

"With reference to the inner life of the mass which compose the order, my informant told me much. What I thus learned was not very creditable to their morality, but it indicated a most skillful system of political Machiavelism. A leading principle, openly avowed, is to set one

member as a spy over all the others. Any objectionable remark you may make will be told to the superior; what your brother at your side may say you will have to reveal in like manner, from motives of charity, that his spiritual advancement may be promoted by needful correction. The superior knows, guesses, and sees every thing. From this follows a life of deceit—of rebukes, more or less unjust, occasioned by the tale-telling of those who may have reported your conduct. ‘For example,’ said my friend, ‘my superior told me that my great crime was that I was proud of my preaching.’ And how he made me smart for it during the ten years I was among them! How often was my patience at its last ebb! I am not quite certain that, provoked by this perpetual worry, I did not say to him, ‘Farewell, father; I mean to return to liberty.’

“Such is their internal economy. As for their ubiquitous police organization, it is administered as thoroughly as that of the most powerful States; and, in addition to this, it has an inexhaustible source of information, which is wanting in similar Government bodies. I refer to the confessional, which yields endless discoveries apart, of course, from the mere recital of sins by the penitent, which, of course, is never disclosed. It is notorious that they never confess a woman without ascertaining her name, her prospects, her husband’s politics, the newspapers he takes in, the college where the children are being brought up. Thus they arrive at a knowledge of what transpires in private houses, more thorough than any the police could give them.

“I ought in justice to add, however, that the Jesuits, in gleaning and transmitting this knowledge, are under the full impression that they are acting for the glory of God. They regard themselves as mere human instruments in a holy cause, and nothing could be more praiseworthy in their eyes. Unfortunately for them, and for those who do not see the dishonesty of their system, the outside world, ignoring their blind trust, holds them in abhorrence. It repudiates the idea that the end justifies the means. It is loth to believe that Christ would have men do His work by treachery and deceit. The most extraordinary thing is, that it should be possible to mould honest natures into so hateful a type; and that there should be any influence strong enough to invest what is absolutely disgraceful with so fair and excellent a seeming. And it is to this, most likely, that Lamennais refers when he alludes to their system as ‘something contrary to nature.’

“Now you have my reply. Still much of what I have said is based upon mere conjecture. Only I am confident of this, that I have not calumniated them.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A SCENE AT THE PALACE.

WHILE the interesting revelations, as to the system of the Jesuits, recorded in the last chapter, were being eagerly listened to in the house of the archpriest, a very different scene was occurring at the palace itself.

Mademoiselle de Flammarens, from the time of Julio’s entry on his office, had felt a growing dislike to her brother’s favorite. The only condition, indeed, on which her approval of his appointment could be obtained was that she should have a share in its advantages. His predecessor had been discreet enough to see this in his day; he had been the obsequious tool of the lady, whom he called the canoness; and no secrets of the diocese were in his possession a quarter of an hour without her being acquainted with them. Julio, however, was not disposed to fall low at her feet, and she knew it. Hence she conceived an aversion for the young man, which she took care to communicate to the Abbé Gaguel, leading him to believe, with infinite skill, that if the young upstart (a favorite term of hers) succeeded in worming himself into the confidence of the aged cardinal, whose powers had been visibly declining for some months, he, M. Gaguel, would be set aside, and the new secretary would rule the diocese. Less than this would have sufficed to rouse the antipathy of the vicar-general.

These two malignant spirits were full of triumph on listening to the advanced views propounded in Julio’s sermon. Mademoiselle de Flammarens’s velvet chair was placed in the nave, in front of the pulpit, near the clerical stall. At the moment that Julio gave utterance to his strongest sentiments she stole a furtive glance at the vicar-general, as much as to say, “We have him now—he is done for.”

As soon as the discourse was over they met at the palace.

“Dreadful!” said the lady.

“He’ll turn out badly,” said the abbé.

“Did you hear his wild theories?”

“I shrugged my shoulders with dismay.”

“My brother must be mad.”

“I should fancy his eminence will scarcely like it.”

“Don’t think it for a moment. He likes any thing eccentric; and, if I had not held him in check, he would long ago—”

“You must be mistaken. I question whether his eminence would go so far as to sanction such opinions. Why, what the young idiot said was from first to last a complete tissue of heresies.”

“Holy Virgin, and my brother tolerates an apostate like that!”

“No one has more power than the canoness,” said the abbé, with a provoking smile, “to persuade monseigneur of the wrong he is doing in extending his protection to this dangerous person.”

It was evident that Julio was ruined.

The cardinal, on entering the dining-room, perceived at once that their usual good-humor had given way to an air of distant coldness.

"What's the matter now?" he said to himself, and his thoughts reverted to Julio.

Not a word spoken. He was the first to break silence.

"Well, sister, what have you to say of the sermon?"

"What have you got to say yourself, monseigneur?"

"I am pleased with it on the whole. It was full of pith. The exuberance of style will mellow down with age."

"Is that the only fault you have to find with it, monseigneur?"

The cardinal quite understood the very dry tone in which the question was put. Experience had taught him that a storm was brewing in the archiepiscopal establishment whenever the canoness was displeased.

"I must be careful," he muttered to himself. "There's a scene coming. I'll hold my tongue."

The fact is, he was afraid of his sister. There are some feelings which we can never throw off. The cold looks of the little duenna made the good man turn pale. He ventured no reply, but, changing the conversation, addressed himself to the vicar-general, who was too cunning not to detect the manœuvre. He made use of a number of vulgar expressions during the meal, which the cardinal particularly disliked. The rest of the evening was as uncomfortable as the dinner. There was the same ill-humor on the part of the vicar-general, the same reserve from the archbishop, to feed the coming storm.

It was not, however, till M. de Gaguel had retired for the night that it fairly broke out.

"Now that we are alone, monseigneur, I may venture to say, what nobody else would presume to tell you, that you are very wrong in the matter of this young priest."

"Dear me, sister, don't trouble yourself on that score."

His eminence wanted to effect a retreat.

"Monseigneur, my first thought is that you should be held in honor and esteem; so it is not strange that I should be anxious. I have had cause for anxiety more than once."

His eminence became even more conciliatory.

"Dear, kind friend, I know well how much you love me."

This had been just the crisis, in similar outbreaks, when Mdle. de Flammarens got every thing her own way. At that moment a servant entered the room and handed her a little note inscribed "Very pressing."

She opened it and read:

"We were not aware that his eminence had made M. Julio an honorary canon before leaving the church. What a pity!"

The indignation of the lady on receiving this information knew no bounds.

"Fine doings, monseigneur," she exclaimed. "You sanction, by your presence, the absurdities of an intemperate boy. You see only the

errors of youth in that false teaching which had been well digested, and which has thrown the entire town of T—— into the utmost consternation."

The cardinal was silent. He bent under the avalanche. He had a secret misgiving himself that he had been a little too precipitate in making Julio a canon.

But his sister had no mercy for him.

"You have crowned your imprudence," she continued, "in hastening, without consulting your vicars-general, without saying a word on the subject to me, to clothe a seminarist in the purple, and so make him a little monster of conceit."

His eminence ventured slightly to defend himself.

"Good gracious! my dear sister, be reasonable. I was fairly besieged."

"Besieged!"

"Yes, besieged, I assure you."

"Oh, besieged; a pretty thing, indeed! The most illustrious and most reverend cardinal yielding to pressure. From what quarter, may I ask? The archpriest, probably—a thorough-paced wheedler—came to implore a reward for this precious master-piece of oratory. You would make yourself the most obedient humble servant of these insignificant people. We are too proud for that, monseigneur."

"But the chapter came in a body to beg the 'carnal' for Julio."

"And you failed to see that there was some plot at the bottom? Verily, you never fail in your habitual sagacity, except where your new secretary is concerned."

"I have told you I was taken by surprise. What more would you have? Grant that it was a piece of folly."

"One of the greatest you could have perpetrated. I only hope that you will have sufficient self-respect to expose us no longer to this annoyance."

And so saying she took up her candle and retired, leaving the cardinal painfully bewildered and perplexed.

CHAPTER XV.

A CATASTROPHE.

The cardinal reached his apartment and rang for his valet.

He was visibly affected. His sister's reproaches, apart from their exaggeration on the subject of Julio's views, appeared to him just from one point of view; and it was always painful to him to be found out by her in an error of judgment. He felt a sudden attack in his head. Looking in his glass he was filled with alarm: his forehead was suffused with a bright purple color, while strange clouds passed before his eyes: he threw himself into an easy-chair.

Remembering that he had sat down to dinner with his mind distracted by anxieties, he con-

soled himself with the thought that it was nothing more than a severe-attack of indigestion.

Just then his attendant appeared.

"I could not come at once, your eminence, for a messenger has just brought this letter, which he begged me to deliver without delay. I didn't like disturbing your eminence; but he insisted: he was under orders to give it into your eminence's own hands, only I wouldn't let him do that, but promised you should have it to-night."

"Oh, what a worry business is! Let me see the letter."

And opening it, he went to the candle and read as follows:

"Your eminence, under the painful impression of all that we heard from the cathedral pulpit this afternoon, we are compelled to write to you for the purpose of acquainting you with the profound sensation that that unhappy sermon has produced in T——"

"It's too bad for any thing," cried the cardinal, with an irrepressible gesture of impatience. "What I have tolerated from my sister I will submit to from no one else. This verges on insolence. Only a Jesuit would presume to write in this way: none of my other priests would dare to do it. But let's see how it goes on."

"Had your eminence not given a marked sanction—an adherence almost official and episcopal—to the dangerous teaching of M. Julio, by making him canon of the cathedral, we should have been less hurt. But after that deplorable exercise of authority we can only bewail, in silence, the wonderful infatuation which has possessed even a Catholic archbishop, and pray that grace may be vouchsafed to enlighten and arrest him on the verge of ruin."

"Scoundrels!" said the cardinal; "they want to compromise me!"

"We are attached to your person, your eminence; but we cherish still more—more even than our own life—the purity of Catholic truth. We should be grieved to be compelled to appeal to the supreme judge of the Church—our most holy father the Pope, whom Jesus Christ has placed over all His other pastors.

"If, however, your eminence, influenced by our representations, and led to take a better view of the interests of our faith, would, by a public act, aim a blow at these scandalous doctrines..."

Here he turned over. "Why, as I live, the letter is anonymous. The cowards: they positively summon me to the tribunal at Rome!"

The letter fell from his hands: he sank down in his chair; and his valet had considerable difficulty in carrying him to his bed. The cardinal was attacked by a severe apoplectic fit.

As soon as the man had succeeded in laying him down, he rushed outside calling for help; the next moment the room was full. Mademoiselle de Flammarens came and tried to get her brother to speak to her, but a few inarticulate sounds were his only replies. However, he

looked at her earnestly, and that look induced her to believe that there was yet hope.

They sent for his physician immediately. He lived in the Place du Capitole, some distance off. He was not at home when the servant arrived. He had been dining at his daughter's house, near the Botanic Garden, at the other end of T——.

The messenger, instead of running for another physician, set off for the Botanic Garden by the shortest road through the main streets. Meanwhile the doctor had just set off home, and was coming quietly along by the outer Boulevards.

The man returned to the palace in despair, and detailed his ill-success; whereupon they resolved to send for another medical attendant.

These goings and comings had wasted much time.

The brain was giving way every minute. All the servants were in tears. Mademoiselle de Flammarens, half-stupefied, preserved a mournful silence, interrupted from time to time by heavy sobs. They made him inhale smelling-salts; but the attack was evidently getting the upper hand. At length the two physicians arrived almost at the same moment and held a consultation. "It's very late," they said. The first bleeding produced but very slight results; they tried another with almost the same success.

"He is gone!"

The word rang like a knell in the ears of the old lady. Apart from her affection for her brother, all her hopes for the future vanished with his life.

"For Heaven's sake, gentlemen," she cried, "try some other remedies!"

They told her that every other remedy was but a feeble palliative. They might try another bleeding, but possibly he would expire under the operation.

"By all means make the attempt; perhaps you'll save his life."

The result exceeded their hopes. The sufferer recovered his senses. He was able to speak to his sister and his medical attendants.

"Thank you, gentlemen, I am quite conscious. God has made use of you to enable me to receive the last blessing which a Christian can enjoy from His bounty—time to prepare to meet his Judge."

Turning to his valet, "Make every arrangement for me to receive the last sacraments. Call a priest, the Abbé Julio, do you hear?" he added, with a clear voice..... "My sister, and you my friends, please leave me now; you can return while I am receiving the extreme unction. I feel that I have few moments left, so I want time for self-examination."

Julio was going to his room in one of the wings of the palace when he was overtaken by the valet, who told him the calamity which had occurred, and conveyed to him the cardinal's dying wishes.

Shocked beyond all conception, he went at once to the sick chamber.

"My dear, dear boy," said the old man, "I wish you to guide my last devotions, and receive my last sigh. My very minutes are numbered. Poor Julio, see what a little, little thing is the grandeur of earth! Sit down at my bedside, my child. Bless me, and receive my confession."

The eyes of the young priest filled with tears. A cardinal, an archbishop, was the first penitent over whom he was called upon to pronounce, in the name of a sin-pardoning God, the decree of absolution.

The cardinal, in a firm, distinct voice, confessed, with deep penitence, all the prominent sins of his whole life; then he bowed his silvered head under the hand of the young priest, to receive the message of forgiveness.

"Now for a parting embrace, my dear Julio. I should like to leave you a keepsake—a proof of my intense affection for you. Give me your hand, that hand which, for the last time, has been laid on my head in token of the forgiveness which God has, I humbly hope, bestowed upon a sinner. Here is my pastoral ring. Promise me that, whatever your earthly destiny may be—whether cardinal of the Church, or an obscure curate in some forgotten village—you will never part with this pledge of remembrance."

"Your eminence, I do indeed promise."

And, kissing the old man's hand, he received the ring and placed it on his finger.

"Call me no longer 'your eminence,' dear friend. I do not like it now. Did they ever so call the Son of the carpenter? My age places me in the relation of a father to you; my heart, which is full of affection for you, in the position of your friend. I rejoice to think that my latest sigh will be breathed while you are here, and that your noble and blameless hand will close my eyes. And now listen to me. You are about to receive the last solemn utterance of a dying man; you may call it my spiritual will and testament.

"I die in the bosom of the Church Catholic Apostolic and Roman, of which I have been priest, bishop, and cardinal.

"About to appear before Him who is the Immutable Truth, I declare that it has been against my convictions and with extreme repugnance that I have for forty years pursued the dangerous path in which the Church Catholic is at present found. I have violently repressed the noblest instincts of my soul, swallowed my true belief, and allowed nothing to escape me of the teaching God had given me as to the right method of advancing the interests of His Church. To this I owed my rapid promotion. I was called upon to choose between honors which flattered my vanity and a life of trouble and persecution. I have been very weak. I have recoiled before the cross and crown of the new apostolate. I preferred the dignity of the purple, and to achieve that I have sacrificed Truth itself.

"Dear Julio, I charge you to tell this out to the Christian world. My conscience requires it: and the boldness of your language in my

presence, at a time when you little knew that your thoughts were the same as those which I had always entertained, assures me you will be brave enough to give effect to my last wishes. I bitterly reproach myself for the hypocrisy of my life; my heart repudiated it; for hypocrisy has ever been hateful to me.

"I regret the external pomp of my episcopate; the importance which I have appeared to attach to that ancient worship, those liturgies which the poetry of the Middle Ages has left us. It all seems to me worn out, dead, powerless. We want truth now, not poetry. We want spiritual worship, communion in prayer, not dramatic effects. We want language that comes from the heart, evangelical teaching in all its simplicity, instead of sights that appeal to the senses. It is time that we looked for those who will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

"Then, too, I have let it be thought that I believed in the temporal power of the papacy; this, also, was against my conviction. By that inexplicable policy Rome is advancing to her ruin. She is helping free-thinkers. She is preventing the union with herself of other communions who would no longer stand aloof were she liberal, tolerant, and unworldly in her grasp and aims.

"Let the sovereign pontiff hear my last words. Let him know that a dying brother implores him to save the Church spiritual, and resign from necessity a royal power of which scarcely a shred remains.

"I would have it known that my faith remains unshaken in the Church's future, in the principle which no other economy, moral or spiritual, can supplant—'Ye shall love the Lord your God, and one another as brethren.' But I am convinced that the visible Church is on the eve of a vast change. All its unreality, pomp, and pride will vanish before long, leaving that which alone is grand, the imperishable Gospel and the law of brotherly love.

"Having sought pardon of God for all my errors and sins, how can I entertain a feeling of ill-will to man? Nevertheless I would warn the Church against the growth of religious societies, more particularly against the Jesuit order. I would wish to think that each member of that fraternity is actuated by a simple desire to do good; but they adopt human instrumentalities for that end which savor too much of the trickery of worldly politics, and therefore can scarcely be called Christian.

"Charitable societies, such as St. Vincent de Paul projected, and whose aim is to alleviate suffering, are enough in a day when social improvement has put a livelihood within the reach of every man, by means of labor—equally with love, the great first law.

"I see nothing more to add to these feeble utterances beyond the expression of my hope that among the clergy of my beloved France there may multiply men bolder than I have been, and ready to reunite, under a new economy, the world which has abandoned the faith,

and the Church which has misunderstood and misrepresented it.

"God bless you, dear Julio! Your thoroughly evangelical sermon has been one of the greatest treats of my life. I see in you one of the apostles of the Church that shall arise. In the persecution that from to-morrow will overtake you, even in this house of mine, and in the presence of my still warm remains—in the hour when you will be anathematized from every side—never lose your confidence in the coming time. Whether you yourself will be permitted to see better days—whether the dawn of the Church's real life will reveal to you one of its struggling rays ere you descend to the grave, I know not: but I know that the thought of me, and the memory of my mournful inconsistency, will ever follow you.

"You will never have to utter such sorrowful things—to proclaim your weakness and humiliation. You will have walked uprightly before men—and the glory of the truth you have defended will encompass you in the presence of God.

"Adieu, my dear Julio! adieu, my child! I feel that my strength is going. There is, however, one important commission left. You see that letter? It comes from the Jesuits: no oth-

ers of my clergy would have ventured to write in such a strain. Take care of it. I commit it to your individual keeping. History will require it one day. It ought to be known that an archbishop, a cardinal of the Roman Church, can be threatened in France, by the Jesuits, with the thunders of Rome.

"The exhausted energies of an old man have proved unequal to this painful excitement. I have had to go through a most distressing scene with my poor sister; and that Jesuit letter has struck the final blow. I die a martyr; for it is their hatred of you, and of the truth which you so eloquently thrust before them, that they have visited on me. I freely forgive their blind fanaticism. Farewell, Julio! Call in my sister and the rest—only don't leave me: stay till the end, to close my eyes."

The last sacraments were then administered. He was still able to pray. When the priest uttered the sublime invitation, "Go, Christian spirit, to the splendors of immortality," the old man re-echoed the words. Then, calling his sister, he squeezed her hand affectionately—

"Farewell, sister!"

And, turning to his attendants—

"Farewell, my friends!"

And the dying agonies came on.

P A R T I I.

H O S T I L I T I E S C O M M E N C E.

CHAPTER I.

THE VACANT THRONE.

THE death of a bishop is a great event in a provincial town. A new reign will soon commence, and the cry goes forth at once among the palace courtiers, the king is dead—"long live the king!"

No one is sooner forgotten than a dead ruler. His ashes are hardly in the grave before every thing is arranged as though he had never existed.

The cardinal, who had redeemed the inconsistency of his life by the courage of his dying words, expired in dreadful suffering. Julio had received his last farewell and closed his eyes. Seated motionless by the bed, he passed the remainder of that cruel night with the sister and servants of the late prelate, in the awful presence of Death.

The Abbé Gaguel, who owed every thing to the cardinal, had also contrived to make a certain display of uncontrollable grief. He regretted his benefactor less than his high position with the cardinal—a position, too, which he had intended to improve had the cardinal lived.

The dead man's sister, heartless and selfish, made all the requisite demonstrations of natural emotion. She had been too prudent and clever a lady, however, not to have secured beforehand a most satisfactory will, which left her her brother's sole legatee.

Nothing remained but to inter the deceased prelate with the usual solemnities. The chapter met the morning after his death, and proceeded to the election of vicars-capitulars. They were divided into two parties, represented respectively by the archpriest and M. Gaguel. These men hated one another most cordially, and their rivalry was conspicuous on this occasion, when each was actuated exclusively by unqualified self-love.

M. Gaguel carried the day. He succeeded in causing himself to be nominated vicar-general capitular, with two other canons of his party, and the archpriest was effectually baffled.

A high-sounding manifesto, duly reiterating those official regrets which accompany dead bishops to their graves, was composed by M. Gaguel, and signed by his two colleagues. In his capacity of senior vicar-general he undertook virtually the administration of the diocese.

Julio was too dignified, and had too genuine a love of self-respect, to embroil himself in these intrigues. Full of unutterable grief, he dis-

charged the daily task which the cardinal had intrusted to him.

The Jesuits made a great show of mourning for the dead. They celebrated a solemn service in their chapel. The quantity of wax they burned round an enormous catafalque which they had constructed for the occasion was incalculable; at the same time, however, they did not fail to insinuate a rumor in their own circles that God had visited the unhappy cardinal for his sin in sanctioning Julio's teaching. Such old ladies as delight in bigotry—such young ones as live by enthusiasm—came to the conclusion naturally that the visitation was most righteous; and from that moment Julio's name revived, wherever it was heard, unpleasant association with those of Luther or Satan.

Not that this feeling was abroad among sensible men. There the archbishop had many warm admirers. They made allowance for his love of show—detecting underneath his real instincts. They heard him speak officially, in proper episcopal style; but they knew that his prelate's robes concealed an upright and enlightened spirit.

Visits of condolence flowed in from all sides. The most enthusiastic expressions of anguish were poured into the ears of Mademoiselle de Flammarens and M. Gaguel, while Julio was saluted as a master intellect, and interrogated as to the details of that sudden and unexpected death.

Julio repeated almost word for word, to a few intimate friends, the dying statements of the cardinal. Verdelen—who had a wonderful memory—wrote down the account at the close of a long conversation in which Julio had clothed, in glowing language, the last utterances of the old man.

He allowed some other friends to copy his MS.; and within a week this singular production had been circulated through the entire town, while even the *Eagle*, a T— newspaper, had alluded to it.

Two copies of the pamphlet had not been at large before the Jesuit police brought one of them to the Provincial. Violently enraged, he summoned a grand council, read the document with an agitated voice, and ended by asking them what they thought of it.

"It's a hateful invention of the young reprobate. We know the cardinal well. It will be necessary to make an energetic protest against this defamatory libel. Perhaps it would be desirable to prosecute him."

"Take care," said one; "copies of the religious testament of the cardinal unsigned and

unpublished could never constitute a criminal charge against the Abbé Julio. But if, as one may judge from a clause in the manuscript, it is intended to be published, then, I think, we may follow him up for defamation."

The seven concurred in this remark. Three days afterward the *Catholic Atlas* had the following article:

"We learn from T—— that the death of the Cardinal de Flammarens has caused universal regret. The funeral was very superb. All the clergy of the diocese were present, and the entire population evinced the profoundest respect for the memory of the deceased prelate. M. l'Abbé Gaguel, the vicar-general-in-chief, pronounced a most eloquent funeral oration, which was universally admired.

"The deceased prelate, by his devotion to his sacred office, and his love of sound doctrine, has left behind him an unsullied reputation. Unhappily, however, a contemptible anonymous manuscript has been circulated in T——, professing to be an authentic transcript of his religious opinions. Apart from the insults which this production hurls against an illustrious society, long ago placed, by their virtues, their knowledge, their attachment to the head of the Church, in the van of Catholicism, it attributes to the venerable cardinal opinions so outrageous, so utterly repugnant to those which he has been known to entertain during his whole life, that no sensible person could, for a moment, credit its pretensions. Free-thinkers, however, and enemies of the Church, are making considerable use of it. They venture to affirm that these are the veritable last words of the dying man, and that he uttered them in the lucid interval just before his death. It requires no small amount of credulity to swallow such a tale as this.

"The document referred to is ascribed to the authorship of a certain young priest, whom the cardinal had treated with extraordinary condescension, and whose head has been turned by the flattering attention which he has received.

"It is expected that the administrators of the diocese for the time being will take energetic measures to prevent the publication of this disgraceful document, and punish as he deserves the author of such a barefaced imposture.

"LABICHE."

It is not difficult to detect the writer of the above article. It created an immense sensation at T——, and the *Star of Languedoc*, a Jesuit organ, did not fail to reproduce it, with additions, no less treacherous, of its own. It was evident already that the Jesuit faction would spare no efforts to have Julio driven out in disgrace, if not from the diocese, at all events from the honorable post in which the cardinal had placed him.

The day after these attacks in the religious newspapers all the frequenters of the palace looked more and more coldly at Julio. Those who had so recently flattered him, with the arch-priest at their head, foreseeing his disgrace, as-

sumed toward him a constrained air, and sometimes went so far as to shun him openly. Proud of the suffrages of the chapter and archbishop in fact, the Abbé Gaguel, the close ally of Madame de Flammarens, hesitated to expel the secretary, in spite of her entreaties. He was perfectly aware that such a measure would be agreeable to the Jesuits and the partisans of the *Catholic Atlas*; but he had acquired a habit, during the many years he had passed in office, of acting on every occasion with all possible caution. So, anxious to avoid a demonstration, he disregarded his eager personal desire to be rid of a man who had always been in his way, suppressed his private animosity, calmed the impatience of the canoness, and comforted himself with the thought that he might safely wait a while, as Julio, with his antecedents, his character, and the part he had played at the cardinal's death, would be sure to furnish some sufficiently plausible pretext for the desired measure. Then there was the forthcoming publication of the pamphlet, which, thanks to the *Atlas*, had attracted the notice of religious men, and with which Rome and the sacred congregation of the *Index* were already occupied.

That little work was, in point of fact, soon to appear. Julio, with Verdelon's assistance, had given the last touch to the manuscript which was to represent a Roman cardinal as an innovator. It was sent to a celebrated publisher in Paris, to secure for the posthumous utterances of M. de Flammarens the utmost publicity.

Julio and Verdelon, having no wish for concealment in the matter, told their friends that the pamphlet would soon be out, and congratulated themselves at the thought of the impression it would create. The *Eagle* went further; and in order the more effectually to stimulate curiosity, announced that the coming work would revive the passionate discussions which arose out of Lamennais's famous work, *Les Paroles d'un Croquant*. This article created a perfect tempest of excitement in T——. Men of the world who had been fascinated by the eloquence of the young priest in the pulpit of St. Stephen's made open declaration of their sympathy with his ideas of reform. To their admiration of his undoubted oratorical powers they added the patriotic feeling so powerful in the south. Julio was a son of their country—a credit to their town—so he must be protected; for the glory with which his name was surrounded seemed to spread itself over the city, said one of learned reputation, already rich in men distinguished by the acquisition of every branch of knowledge. The *Atlas* and the Jesuits were in a condition little short of frenzy. Southern brains soon catch fire, and when once these men had come to believe that God did not know how to take care of His own truth, but needed a little of their fanaticism to help Him, there was no limit to the eagerness with which they sought to prove their love to Him by hatred to his creatures.

Easter was close at hand. A very long time had elapsed since Louise had been to the con-

fessional. Annoyed at first with Father Briffard's observations, she had wished to allow time for getting rid of the disagreeable impression which his interested and inopportune harangue had produced. In this manner a whole month slipped by, and at the bare thought of him she felt herself embarrassed from another cause. She knew she would be cross-questioned as to why she had passed four long weeks without presenting herself at the confessional, and then she would catch it finely; a concluding reflection which did not tend to reassure her. Another month passed, and the difficulty grew mountains high; and now there was nothing for it but to meet this formidable father as the most penitent of penitents, acknowledging utter worldliness, and imploring the satisfaction of no end of penance.

Moreover, to tell the whole truth, there was something on her conscience. She had met Verdalon several times in her brother's company; and he, a fashionable young gentleman now, was no longer the downcast monastic youth that he had been in days when beauty never won from him look or thought. It never entered into the artless head of her genius-brother to suspect that his sister could possibly love any one else in the world besides himself. But modest and refined as she was, she belonged after all to her sex. Her glance designed to rest on the eligible male individuals who, especially since the famous sermon at St. Stephen's, had courted Julio's society. But there was one among them whose image outshone the others, and in those intercommunions which the young maiden had, whether she would or no, with her heart of hearts, the name of Augustus Verdalon was perpetually recurring, and Louise, though only in the presence of her own conscience, actually blushed.

Her indulgent old aunt guessed probably her natural aversion to Father Briffard, and regretting that she had not been bold enough to withstand him herself, neither mentioned his name nor spoke of confession. Every week it was,

"I am going to the chapel of the Inquisition."

"Are you, dear aunt? would you like me to accompany you?"

"No, my dear child, Madelette is enough," for the good woman quite understood Louise's meaning.

However, as the fortnight before Easter drew on, Madame de la Clavière became anxious. Over and over again she had it on the tip of her tongue to say that her niece ought to be thinking of the great festival. For a young lady, well born, strict hitherto in her religious observances, to fail in keeping Easter, was to secure herself at T—the reputation of having at least two lovers; and had Louise been thus reported of she would most certainly have been very grievously calumniated. Such indeed is the force of public opinion in provincial towns, that certain religious acts must be performed, whether with a good or ill grace, whether personal piety lead to their observance or private

causes tend to prevent it. In religion, as in every thing else, public opinion is an inflexible tyrant.

We may add that Father Briffard, who was a discerning ecclesiastic, having noticed Madame de la Clavière and Madelette at the confession several times, but no Louise—Louise whom he had petted—Louise on whom he had lavished such gracious names—understood at once that he had produced a crisis in the feelings of his young penitent, and that she had shaken off the yoke she had so long worn. He came to the conclusion that it was no use to think of the religious life for her any longer; that, to put it plainly, the devil had triumphed, and that if he was so lucky as to catch her again it would have to be by another plan. That it was out of the question to represent to her that she ought to return to a path from which of course she had never departed, but that he would have to push her into a corner so effectually as to put it out of her power to attempt escape. It occurred to him at one time that Julio had endeavored to persuade her to give up confessing to the Jesuits; but this idea he abandoned. Utopians and dreamers like the young priest, he argued, do not usually descend to practical details, or hunt out ways of small revenge. And in this he was right.

He had taken good care, however, to question her aunt on the subject. Meanwhile he waited the Easter festival, when he would be obliged to know for certain whether his wandering sheep was in the power of Satan, or whether it would have the good taste to return wounded and footsore from roamings over the sharp rocks of the world, pleading and pitiful to the very reverend Briffard, to ask him to extend to it again the shelter and warmth of his fatherly bosom.

The Saturday week before Easter Madame de la Clavière said to Louise,

"Dear child, I am getting weaker and weaker. I wish to commence the Easter services tomorrow: they will probably be my last. My strength is ebbing away. Will you not make me happy by the sight of you at my side at the holy table?"

And the eyes of the kind though weak old woman filled with tears.

There was no getting out of this; so Louise summoned all her courage for the emergency.

"Certainly, my dearest aunt: I will go with you to the chapel of the Inquisition."

CHAPTER II.

FATHER BRIFFARD AGAIN.

LOUISE was full of indescribable terrors. She naturally expected bitter reproaches and terrible menaces, such as the lords of the confessional occasionally adopt—at times successfully—to terrify their penitents, and so get out from them the full tale of their delinquencies. Trembling all over, and almost beside herself, she never-

theless prolonged her torture by begging Madelette to precede her at the tribunal. At length, when the fatal moment arrived, scared and bewildered, like a convict approaching the scaffold, she fell on her knees before the father, stifling a groan and bathed in tears.

"Bless me, father!"

And a long-drawn sigh—a sigh so heart-rending as to show that she had no strength of will left—escaped from her bruised spirit.

"Here you are, daughter, I see: tell me carefully all your faults."

The words were uttered with such perfect gentleness, the quietness of the tone was, to all appearance, so natural, that the courage of Louise revived. She enumerated her usual transgressions; her sins of the tongue which she was unable to specify—gave, in short, just that summary which may be expected from those who have not been exposed to grave temptation. Woman though she was, and therefore generally prolix in her confession, she was by no means long on the present occasion. She was very careful to avoid mention of her new feelings—regarding herself strictly as in the presence of a judge, who was neither father nor friend—and wound up by saying,

"I remember nothing more."

"Very well, daughter. I suppose you wish to observe Easter?"

"Most certainly, father, if you think me fit."

"Just so, daughter."

And without making the least allusion to the long interval which had elapsed since her last confession, after having delivered one of those vague exhortations which he might have addressed to a perfect stranger—very brief, and in which all language of reproach was carefully avoided—he said,

"Now I will absolve you."

The absolution over, he resumed:

"My child, I have heard your confession; that is an affair between God and you. At present, the interest which I have so long felt in you—an interest which I would desire to sustain at all costs—requires me to admonish you in a matter of highest importance—affecting your future welfare. Your aunt is very old; she might die at any moment. At her death your brother will be your only relative. I trust he loves you, and that you have some influence over him. Listen then quietly to what I have to say. Your brother is on the brink of an abyss. We have learned from the newspapers that he meditates publishing a disgraceful pamphlet, which he presumes to give to the world under the name of the late Cardinal de Flammarens. This work is, to begin with, a shameful affair—more than that, it is a fearful mistake. Neither the vicars-general capitular nor the new archbishop will suffer a young priest to issue, in the name of a deceased prelate, the soundness of whose views was notorious, a tissue of extravagances, such as are reported to be contained in this insignificant but audaciously libelous book.

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"The manuscript is said to have been transmitted to Paris, to secure for it extensive publicity through those infidel libraries which are disseminating every where infamous books against God and His Church.

"There is time yet to avert the calamity. You may rescue your brother. We know that an interdict is prepared for him in the diocese; though M. Gaguel, from charity, from compassion for so young a priest, mercifully delays its promulgation. But should the book appear, he will be most reluctantly compelled by public opinion to adopt that fearful extreme. From this day, then, seek out your brother, and use every effort to dissuade him. Let him recall his manuscript; let him formally prohibit the printer from proceeding with it; let him pledge himself to live henceforth the life of a submissive Churchman; let him assure M. Gaguel, who is kindness itself to the priests of the diocese, that he is an altered man, that he has returned to the wise opinions he was so infatuated as to reject. Should he do this, you may assure him that all will be forgotten. Those pious spirits, at present scandalized by his conduct and doctrines, will be cheered by such a recantation. He will be recommended to the favor of the new archbishop, and will be preserved from that misery and disgrace which the strong hand of authority invariably inflicts with merciless power on the rebel and renegade, for the terror of the insubordinate and the proud.

"Once more, save your brother. Give him clearly to understand that if this book is published he is ruined. There is not a moment to hesitate. He must recall his manuscript at once, recant, and submit.

"Farewell, daughter. You see that I have not forgotten you, and that I am anxious to preserve you from terrible calamities—the disgrace of your family, the dishonor which ever attaches to the name of an interdicted priest. When you draw near to the table of the Lord ask courage from Him. For my part, I, too, will pray for this unhappy wanderer; and all our fathers, who love you much, will unite in our prayer. Farewell. Save your unfortunate brother."

And the little grating of the dark confessional was closed.

"Merciful God! what misery is in store for us!" Such was Louise's last ejaculation, in the depths of her unutterable anguish.

Happily for her her aunt and Madelette were gone. She arose instantly, and taking the shortest possible road to the palace, found her brother, who had just returned from the cathedral, and was about to partake of his humble breakfast.

Her features were disturbed with grief. Her large eyes, generally so mild and clear, were mournful now, and swollen with weeping. Her pallor, and the convulsive twitchings of the muscles of her face, indicated the deepest distress.

"Good Heavens, Louise, is my aunt dead?"

"No, brother."

"Thank God! I can breathe freely. But what bad news have you brought?"

Thus interrogated, Louise summoned all her courage, and repeated almost word for word what Father Briffard had said.

Thoroughly convinced, as she was, that the Jesuits hated her brother, she nevertheless felt that the threat was true, and that should the testament be published an interdiction would most assuredly follow. So she implored Julio by all that he held dearest in the world—by that brotherly love which he had lavished upon her—by the tenderest reminiscences of their childhood—in the name of her aunt, to whom they owed their education and a thousand other benefits, to draw back from a course which would certainly bring her to a premature grave. She placed before him all the troubles which would await him from the moment that he set himself in opposition to authority which proclaimed itself to be implacable, and from the chastisements of which there was no redress.

To be compelled to return to the world after having been for a few months only a priest—an object of aversion to his brethren—and of horror in the eyes of all the faithful! What a prospect! and *that*, yes, *that* awaited her beloved Julio.

To his sister's eloquent appeal Julio returned answer that he had fully estimated the weight of her arguments, and that if he listened to the voice of his natural heart he would lose no time in withdrawing the manuscript, and so, by giving complete satisfaction, ask indulgence from those in authority.

"But," said he, "I am pledged to a solemn moral engagement. I have given my word to a dying man, and I can not perjure myself. I know that priestly power has a pitiless heart. But I can not, without degrading myself to my own conscience—without incurring hopeless remorse through my whole life—fail in the most earnest assurance I have ever given, next to that which bound me to the altar. Forgive me, my beloved Louise; pity your brother. And if he be already all but an outcast—the abhorrence of the priesthood—keep for him, as a shelter from a world which seems to delight to live in hatred, an asylum in your heart where no ill can reach him. I shall at least have your esteem then; and if ever I were plundered of your sisterly affection the testimony of a good conscience would be left, and that would be enough."

Louise tried her last resource. She wept violently; but Julio remained inflexible.

"Don't ask me to be a coward," he exclaimed, as he overwhelmed his sister with endearing caresses. "My poor darling," he continued, "be brave. Remember that it is better far to be with the hunted and forsaken who still retain their uprightness of heart and conscience than with cowards and persecutors."

Madame de la Clavière might well be anxious at her niece's prolonged absence. The wretched girl, however, made all possible speed to get back to the Rue du Taur. Her brother had fail-

ed to convince her. There are, in truth, sacrifices which the weaker sex can not understand. The Spartan mothers, indeed, used to say to their sons setting out for battle, as they handed them their shield, "Behind it or on it." It is accepted among women that, to wipe out an insult, a man ought to expose himself to the chances of a duel—death or homicide. But the heroism of humiliation is beyond their comprehension. Christianity has reiterated the words for 1800 years, "Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness' sake." They hear this from the pulpit, sometimes eloquently urged. When they read the Gospel, they find it there; as well as in homilies on self-denial. To suffer for justice, to drink the poison-cup of infamy drained by the heathen Socrates, to submit to the cross as their Master did, without a murmur: all this passes before their mind as an idea which they see to be grand, but which they translate from practical life to the regions of theory; so rarely is it realized either by those who teach or those who hear.

Louise was crushed by her brother's firmness. That he should embitter his existence, that he should at the same time poison the lives of those who loved him, and whom he ought to make happy, that he might carry out the dying wishes of an old man whose brain was affected at the time he uttered them, and who had nothing more to fear from the curses of men—this was indeed an exaggeration of duty, it was nothing short of madness.

When she entered her aunt's chamber her eyes were tearless; every sign of agitation was gone; her refined and tender smile had come back. There was nothing apparent to lead Madame de la Clavière to suspect the terrible scenes which had just occurred in the confessional and at the palace.

Father Briffard, however, was not satisfied with this first experiment. Foreseeing that Louise would encounter determined resistance from her brother, he sent for the famous Tournichon, the most active and unprincipled of the Jesuit agents. To him he sketched out his plans. They had been debating a long time who in the town was likely to have most influence over the recalcitrant abbé. Now Tournichon was well aware of the intimacy between Julio and Verdelon. He knew that the manuscript was their joint production. There were other things too that he knew equally well: and from one of his spies, who sometimes met Louise in society, he had ascertained that Verdelon was not indifferent to the sister of his friend. So it was decided that Tournichon should call on Madame de la Clavière, and secure her aid, as well as that of her niece, in the effort to gain over to their side the man who had helped in the preparation of the obnoxious pamphlet, which contained, as was well known, some tolerably smart things against the Jesuits. At the same time Tournichon and Father Briffard acknowledged to one another, as they exchanged a glance which attested their long ex-

perience in such matters, that if the eyes of Mademoiselle de la Clavière fell discouragingly on this last attempt it was hopeless to try any further measures.

This undertaking was by no means easy of accomplishment. Tournichon, however, resolved to try his best. He presented himself the same evening at the Rue du Taur, and, before playing the usual game of cards—the old lady's favorite relaxation—led the conversation to Julio. He extolled his talents to the skies, and spoke of the great interest which the good fathers took in him.

"But," added he to his venerable friend, "I can not conceal from you the sensation produced among all right-thinking people by a certain outrageous pamphlet which threatens nothing less than an attack on the reputation of the late cardinal."

It was easy for Tournichon to terrify Madame de la Clavière with reference to the consequences that would attend its publication. He suggested that it was the general belief that all arguments would fail with Julio, except it were those of his friend who had assisted him in its preparation.

"You alone, my worthy friend—you alone, with your niece, can save this unhappy youth. Unite bravely in the enterprise, and go to M. Verdelon. It will be unpleasant, I doubt not; but supposing you succeed, what happiness for yourselves, what misery spared to the young priest—at least, what scandal in the Church, so everlastingly insulted! Set out, then, dear friend, with this charming niece of yours. In these chivalrous days ladies are refused nothing. When we want to gain a lawsuit we send them to plead with the judges. Whoever wants a particular post sets to work at once to secure their interest. Use yours in this extremity, dear friend."

Madame de la Clavière, persuaded by this eloquent harangue, promised to make the attempt, declaring at the same time, however, that it would be very painful to her to do so.

"Never mind, dear lady. Do not be afraid. Surely, surely the end justifies the means: look at Judith."

Louise colored slightly.

"My dear young lady," continued the old fox, "you are not asked to cut off M. Verdelon's head. But surely no harm is done by being—amiable!"

It was decided that the following afternoon the La Clavière ladies were to call on M. Verdelon.

The good old lady, from her weak state of health, and the habit of many years, received nobody at her house. Her confessor had accustomed her to this voluntary seclusion, the better to preserve her from any influence which might counteract that of M. Tournichon. She had become as timid as a child. Consequently she had not accomplished half of the distance between her house and M. Verdelon's, before she felt her courage ebbing away at the idea of

making a call, with the object of preferring a request. She communicated her uneasiness to Louise. That young lady, in spite of her secret partiality for the gentleman in question, was as little disposed for the visit as her aunt. A refined sense of propriety told her, that when one of her sex asks an important favor from a young man the lord of her affections, it is, in some sort, a pledge. She endeavored, however, to encourage her aunt.

"Never fear; M. Verdelon is so natural; he will put you so thoroughly at your ease, dear aunt, that you will have nothing to apprehend. Moreover, last recess, he spent a fortnight at La Clavière; and you often told me how much you admired his modesty, intelligence, and thoughtful attention."

"I remember perfectly, Louise."

"I am certain he will lay himself out to be agreeable to you, my dear aunt."

"Let us ask God that he may," said she, raising her eyes. "What a mercy if we could be the means of saving our very dear boy!" as she always called Julio.

Though the ladies had walked very slowly they arrived at that moment at Verdelon's abode. Louise knocked at the door. Her heart beat when an old housekeeper appeared and told them he was in his study. They were shown into a small drawing-room, tastefully decorated.

There is something indefinable in the curiosity of a love-stricken heart. Louise devoured with her eyes the framed engravings, almost all of them works of art, with which the room was adorned. Family miniatures, in oval frames, hung round the supports of the pier-glass over the chimney-piece.

"Doubtless Auguste's mother is among these," said Louise. "He must be a good son."

She noticed every one of those many pretty little nothings which young people delight in, and which are often presents from friends or remembrances of journeys. Nothing escaped her rapid glance, and a half-opened door revealed to her the elegant library of the young man for whom Julio had so often predicted a brilliant future.

This little room, in such exquisite order and so gracefully decorated, gave her a high opinion of the moral worth of Auguste Verdelon.

Women judge by their instincts; and it is owing to those strange influences which appeal rather to the heart than to the head that it happens that they are so much more rarely deceived than men.

Verdelon entered the room by the library door, and excused himself forthwith to Madame de la Clavière for not having come immediately. He was thoroughly at his ease, and hastened to recall the remembrance of the pleasant days he had spent at La Clavière in happiest intimacy with them all. He had forgotten nothing; not even the malicious practical jokes of Miss Louise.

So the ground was admirably prepared for the forthcoming overtures. It was the old lady's duty to open the subject.

The courage which she had prayed for had been granted. She detailed in touching terms her anxiety with reference to Julio and his unfortunate pamphlet. She informed Verdelon that an interdict was in store at the palace, that the religious world in the town was greatly agitated, and that it exercised a powerful influence over the decisions of the vicars-capitular: and that at any moment suspension "a divinis" (such was the term with which Tournichon had so effectually terrified her that it had stuck in her memory) might be pronounced against him.

"I shall never survive," she added, "Julio's dishonor; and I shall carry away to the tomb, with deepest grief, the thought of the disgrace which it will have brought upon our family name. What will be the future prospects of poor Louise when her brother is in so fearful a position? For you can not be ignorant, dear M. Verdelon, that, with us, to interdict a priest is to degrade him to a convict's position."

Then she proceeded to insinuate, with fair adroitness, that it was generally understood in the town that he, M. Verdelon, had assisted in the preparation of this pamphlet which had raised the storm, and that he shared the responsibility which would attach to its publication. Would it not, then, be easy for him to rescue the poor abbé from the frightful punishment that threatened him, but which could not affect himself, by alleging his right as having worked with him at the manuscript, and so exerting sufficient influence with his friend to prevent him from proceeding any further in the matter?

Verdelon listened with that feeling of filial deference, combined with pity and regret, which is always inspired by old age, more especially when menaced with some heavy affliction.

Louise, seated near her aunt, repeated with her looks every word that had been spoken; and this accompaniment of the old lady's address was by no means the least powerful argument employed. Her expression so holy, yet so wrought up by sorrow, influenced Verdelon with an all but magical power. A terrible struggle raged within him. He was too clear-sighted not to see the advantage he might gain, so far as the feelings of Louise were concerned, should she find in him Julio's preserver. On the other hand, he was too honorable to deceive Madame de la Clavière by promising to avail himself of those supposed rights which the shrewdness of the old lady led her to fancy she had discovered in his connection with the dreaded work. As far as the matter itself was concerned, any unrighteous punishment which Julio might incur appeared to him to involve little short of a title to heaven.

However, he could not reasonably refuse to exert his influence with his friend. He engaged to do his best to rescue him, if possible, from the impending suspension *a divinis*.

The ladies rose to leave. The promise had encouraged them to hope.

"Save us, Monsieur Verdelon," said Louise, as she followed her aunt from the door.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP.

To the dignified Cardinal de Flammarens—a clever man, overflowing with liberal and generous ideas, which he had suppressed in order to secure ecclesiastical preferment—there succeeded Pierre François Paul le Cricq, senior vicar-general of Nevers, and for ten years Bishop of Luçon. Inferior in many respects to the deceased prelate, he had one undeniable advantage over him, and that was aptitude for most skillfully directing the work of the diocese. Though his mind was not altogether inactive, he had little power as an orator, and his episcopal charges were as prosy as that species of literature could well be. Hard and close with his clergy, he still pretended to be just; and if any one were plucky enough to hold up their heads in his presence, and brave the first terrible onset of his wrath, the alarming dignity softened down, entered into a compromise, and, instead of hurling at the unhappy priest a decision bristling with future terrors, said, simply, "Return to your post, I will see to it"—a direction equivalent almost invariably to a full pardon.*

The clergy of T—— readily adapted themselves to this man, who had passed twenty years of his life in presiding over a large monastery. Father Cricquet (such was the nickname he had received, in accordance with a frequent fashion in all dioceses) was a tolerable sort of man. He never took in any great ideas. He was always scribbling, scribbling; but, after he had held his council and written his letters, he would go in a complacent spirit, like a good old seminarist, and have a game at backgammon with one of his vicars-general or his secretary, assuming that his diocese was in the most blissful order and repose.

His reputation was spotless. Although at his state banquets he paid his respects to excellent wines, yet he never exceeded a condition of jovial good humor. He had brought with him from Luçon a young vicar-general and a young secretary. The famous Gagucl had managed so skillfully as to secure his own continuance in the office which he held. He had accomplished that by a journey which he made to Luçon, immediately after the archbishop's nomination, on which occasion he furnished the new prelate with full particulars concerning all the clergy in his diocese. The details were so mi-

* The reader will understand that the author, in placing the scene of these transactions in a town in the south of France, has merely adopted this plan that he might have a frame-work for his tale, without intending the slightest allusions to any church dignitaries of the present day. Throughout the whole book his portraits are purely imaginary. While he feels himself justified in assailing the abuses which have crept into existing institutions, he never degrades himself by personal attacks.

nute and exact that the archbishop found executed ready to hand a task of great importance, which would have taken him ten years' supervision of his new diocese before he could have accomplished it. Gagué saw that he was necessary to his new master, while the other, concealing his satisfaction, assumed the air of one conferring a great favor when he informed him that he purposed retaining him in his post. Gagué, on the other hand, was equally on the alert, and promised not to lose an hour in repairing the neglect which had arisen under the cardinal's administration, convinced fully in his own mind that, in two or three years, he would be made a bishop.

His secret papers had greatly interested the archbishop. They were as vigorous and accurate as a legal document. And it was the proof thus afforded of long and patient toil which had excited his admiration. Notorious scandals, mere suspicions, informations, acts of imprudence, all were detailed under the head of each name—from the youngest priest to the archpriest himself; and that with a sternness of language investing the whole with the character of an indictment.

Of course Julio had his place in these clerical statistics: "A dangerous man, with a heated imagination, proud, full of self-conceit because his late eminence, when in his dotage, had unfortunately appointed him secretary of the diocese, handling the word of God irreverently; profaning the pulpit by shameful novelties of doctrine, and so outraging religious feeling in T—; allied with an irreligious faction, reading all kinds of books and papers, a sort of free-thinker who ought carefully to have avoided the priesthood, and who would yet occasion frightful scandals in the Church—a priest who required watching, who ought to be kept down with an iron hand, and confined always to the very humblest positions in the Church, in order that the irksomeness, the isolation, the absence of any opportunity to thrust himself forward might shroud him in desirable obscurity: the least show of favor, it was urged, would be his ruin. He was a new Luther, who ought to be suppressed, unless they were prepared to have him setting the Church on fire." The whole wound up with a series of little anecdotes and protests against a man whose life was as pure as an angel's.

A week before M. le Cricq's arrival Julio received the following letter:

"Palace, Luçon, 1859.

"REV. SIR,—I regret to inform you that I have already disposed of the post of secretary-general of the archdiocese of T—. Surrounded as I am here with friends in my private confidence, I could not possibly separate myself from them in the new post to which, in the providence of God, I have been called. I hope to find you a position adapted to your qualifications and tastes.

I have, etc.

"PIERRE FRANÇOIS,
"Archbishop of T—."

The day after his installation Monseigneur le Cricq, faithful to his business ideas, glanced over the list of clergy unemployed, and forwarded a second letter to Julio.

"Palace, T—, 1859.

"REV. SIR,—The vicar of St. Sernin requires a fifth curate. You know the importance of the parish, and the good you may do there. I name you to that post, where I hope that, under the supervision of authority, your career will, for the future, be unexceptionable. You are still young—profit by the experience of your early errors. Be humble, and God will bless your ministry.

"Meantime you may reckon on my sincere friendship.

PIERRE FRANÇOIS,
"Archbishop of T—."

Thus did Monseigneur Cricq, by this first act of his administration, suppress, with very little hesitation, a man of spirit and fervor. He had not, in the slightest degree, criticised the questionable details of M. Gagué. Evidently there was no mercy for Julio from the new ruler: the proposed system of repression was to be carried out. The young man detected at once the influences under which the archbishop had written. He acted in a spirit worthy of himself, and applied himself modestly to his humble task as a curate.

Monseigneur le Cricq was no more fond of the Jesuits than his predecessor had been, but he was more afraid of them. So after his grand levée, when all the clergy of the vast diocese were present to salute the rising sun, his first official visit was paid to the Provincial. He made the most unreserved protestations of his devotion to the order, and left the establishment enchanted with his performance.

The following day the Provincial paid his respects to the archbishop. The good father came to pay his highness the same kind of compliments as he had received from him the day before. The archbishop was more affectionate even than on the previous occasion. He promised to aid the Jesuits to the utmost of his ability in the construction of their intended large establishment. He passed the warmest eulogiums on their zeal, and reiterated his promise to do all he could to promote an order placed by the most holy Pontiffs themselves in the van of Catholicism.

Well aware that his address would be accurately reported at Rome, he spoke in the warmest and most grandiloquent terms of the immortal Pio Nono. He applauded extravagantly the great achievements of his reign. He commended the firmness with which he had opposed himself to the schemes of the Italian revolution. He could speak of nothing but the virtues and the sanctity of Pius. He went so far as to say that, ill-disposed to wait for the Pope's death, he had been tempted often to imitate the example of St. Theresa, with reference to an excellent man whom she greatly revered, to pray to him during his lifetime. The archbishop was evidently driving at the cardinal's hat.

The Provincial, in his turn, was enthusiastic about all the pretty things said by the archbishop before he came to the point which he had at heart—the pamphlet in the press.

The archbishop knew nothing whatever about it. Whether from some hidden motive, or through negligence, Gaguel had never mentioned it. So the Provincial had to tell him all the particulars.

"I will provide a remedy there," he said, in reply.

"Your highness will understand that it is not the interest of our order, so wantonly attacked, that has urged us to action, but that of the Church at large."

"Did I not tell you I would provide a remedy? You may reckon on my vigilance, very reverend father."

And the Provincial, kneeling, humbly received the archiepiscopal blessing, and retired.

Julio hastened to the modest post which had been assigned to him. The fifth curate of St. Sernin exchanged his sumptuous apartment at the archiepiscopal palace for a little lodging at the entrance of the Rue du Taur, near the place St. Raymond. Verdeler was greatly taken up with the request he had received to endeavor to turn his friend from the proposed publishing. He had already commenced his attack by making certain propositions to Julio, to which he had not appeared wholly averse. Verdeler lost no time in communicating to Madame de la Clavière and Louise this promise of success, probably because he thought it right, possibly because it seemed rather long since he had seen the young lady. Since their visit his passion in that quarter had become deeper than ever. He regarded the study where he had received Louise as a sanctuary, and he was forever renewing in his memory the little passage of affection. Do not smile at his enthusiasm, reader; it touched the most serious business in life, on which all earthly happiness hinges.

The ladies were impatient to know the result of Verdeler's efforts. Madame said slyly that he was a long time before he called.

"Don't be alarmed, dear aunt; he is politeness itself," Louise would reply.

This, then, was their one great subject of interest. They had not felt much the banishment of Julio from the palace. They felt confident that, surrounded as he was by enemies, he would scarcely be represented to the new archbishop in the most favorable colors. So as they knew his talents, they did not fear for his future. But the present trouble, the terrible anguish which they so acutely felt, was the threatened interdict of Father Briffard. By a sort of intuitive instinct they had come to regard the man whose yoke they had worn so long as the bitterest persecutor of their house.

When Verdeler at length called his visit was received as a godsend. The mild eyes of the old lady were full of maternal tenderness; while Louise, with her clear, bright gaze, seemed as though she would have given him her whole

soul in the expression with which she regarded him, provided only that Julio was saved.

The young man was quite beside himself with delight.

"Listen to the first concession I have wrung from him," he said, "after long and terrible fights; for the dear fellow is inconceivably obstinate. I seized your idea, madam; so you must have all the credit. I pleaded my rights with reference to the printing. I compelled him to admit that it made no difference to his faithful keeping of his promise to the late cardinal whether the book took his name or mine. I dare not disguise from you that he is still undecided—not from any silly wish to be an author, but simply from his desire to be identified with a publication destined so largely to influence the religion of the future. If he makes the sacrifice I have urged upon him, it will be owing to his grateful devotion to his beloved aunt and his devoted attachment to his sister; but let me assure you it will cost him dear."

Verdeler had been discreet enough to protract a little his negotiation with Julio. You see it was intimately connected with his love-making, inasmuch as it involved sundry visits to a certain abode which was ever open to him now. However little he got out of Julio, they would be none the less under an obligation to him, and he knew well that gratitude is a famous hand at helping on love.

Meanwhile the humiliation of Julio was the talk of the town. The small bigoted sect, jealous priests, Gaguelites and Jesuits, were wild with delight.

"The eminent metropolitan orator!" they said, scoffingly—"the confidant of the late cardinal!—the fifth curate of St. Sernin! Very pretty! The finger of God is there! He knows how to deal with the proud doer."

For Julio, among the meekest of men, was the most self-satisfied in the estimation of this Pharisaic host—thanks to the stigma which Gaguel had attached to him.

The more distinguished people of the town, however, held a different opinion. Independent of little factions, there were in the magistracy, at the bar, in science, among the professors in arts, men who represented worthily the great city, and who brought credit to the capital of the south. These men occasionally were careful to express their opinion of Julio. They spoke of the profound impression which his eloquent sermon had produced upon their minds. They observed that such talents were too rare not to be fostered among the clergy. Nor did they fail to let the archbishop know that they considered Julio's nomination to the fifth curacy of St. Sernin an act of revenge on the part of M. Gaguel, and a concession extorted from his highness.

These representations were not lost on this exalted personage. It was his chief game to exercise a favorable influence over the official world, whose sentiments reach ministers daily, and so build up the reputation of those who receive in consequence the favors of the Govern-

ment. Of course, the archbishop's great anxiety was to obtain, like his predecessor, a cardinal's hat. Now, to be a cardinal in France, two things are required, which, to a man of mere average ability, are by no means easy—first, to secure the favor of Government, which requires a man of extreme moderation; and, next, the favor of Rome, which insists upon the Pope and his temporals before every other living thing. Facts prove that men are found skillful enough to meet the difficulty. The art of arriving at the cardinalate has been thoroughly described in the memorable verses of the fabulist:

I am a bird, you see my wings;
I am a mouse, and rats are kings.
Long live the rats!

So the concluding life of this prelate, who, almost in his seventieth year, had been translated to one of the finest bishoprics in France, was consumed in the miserable attempt to flatter Rome and the Jesuits, and at the same time to keep in favor at Paris, with the consciousness that if he were too civil in this last quarter he would seal his fate in the first. He concluded his conversation with various people on the subject of Julio, by observing that the young man required careful managing; but, in his own mind, he felt he had been a little too hasty in espousing the animosities of Gaguel.

The time was spring—a glorious spring. The town, magnificently situated on the green banks of a clear-flowing river, was being embosomed in the beauty of opening foliage. Trees, shrubs, and flowers expanded laughingly under the fierce sun of the south, whose rays, however, were tempered by the neighboring Pyrenean snows. The health of Madame de la Clavière having been greatly tried by the recent troubles of Julio, and requiring greater care and watching every day, her physician ordered her into the country for change of air. Before they set out Verdelon called to tell them that Julio had consented to remove his name from the forthcoming pamphlet, agreeing that the preface should be signed by Verdelon only, who was in reality the author of it, and orders had been sent to Paris to that effect. Verdelon further promised to endeavor to persuade Julio to some further concession, which should effectually put him out of the reach of censure.

This second visit was exceedingly welcome to the old lady. She conceived a warm affection for her nephew's devoted and energetic friend; and, on telling him of her intended visit to La Clavière, begged that he would soon come and see her; an invitation which he declared himself only too ready to accept, as soon as he had any further tidings to communicate.

The young advocate returned home more smitten than ever with Louise, whose beauty was at that time blossoming daily. He indulged in the delightful dream of a visit to the old country house, where once before, clothed it is true in the clerical dress, he had enjoyed such a pleasant welcome, where his first emotion of love had been experienced, and places linked with such

memories as these are ever tenderly cherished. Julio paid a visit to his aunt and sister the night before their departure. He was in that mood that finds most relief in heart to heart conversation, when a warm, loving, sympathizing look is so well calculated to sweeten the cup of sorrow. Order your life as you will, seize all that position, power, and intellect can give you, if you have never known what it is to unbosom your soul in loving confidence, you have been unfortunate indeed. You have never tasted real love—in its noblest form the soul of human life, eternal as the life that shall ever be, and the eternal God from whom it comes. Ignorant of its real charm, what can you really know of happiness?

Julio's grand idea was a sister's love. What cared he that he was no longer archiepiscopal secretary? Were not his present lodgings as good to him as the costly apartments he had resigned? Was he less distinguished as fifth curate of St. Sernin than when a cardinal of France was bowing before him, and tendering him a sinner's confession, and a bishop's acknowledgment of unprincipled ambition? Happily for him, he had not founded his happiness on human greatness, and so he had not been "made ashamed" when his honors fell from his shoulders. To him whose expectation is from God, who is guided in every thing by the rule of an enlightened conscience, what matters the criticism of the multitude? It was, indeed, pleasant rest to him to leave the fruitless and distracting troubles of ambition to the archpriest of the cathedral, who was already turning from him as henceforth unable to serve him; to Gaguel, who continued to favor him with treacherous smiles, and Monseigneur le Cricq, who would never rest till his crimson had changed to purple, and who, he knew, was temporizing with him, because he dreaded the effect that would be produced at Paris by the tidings that he had been at war with a virtuous and intelligent young priest. They might follow up their eager ambitions—it was their line. He saw life under a very different aspect. If he could count on Louise's sisterly affection; if, during his future life, he might reckon on one loving and devoted heart; if, in his heavier hours of sorrow, there were but that one to come and say to him, "God has given me to thee: what ails thee now?" if he had but this one blessing granted he asked for nothing more.

To this point Julio's most powerful feelings were directed. Though troubling himself very little about common affairs, he saw clearly that his aunt's extensive property would fall into the clutches of Father Briffard. He had made up his mind that the Jesuits should not have their hundred thousands for nothing, though he had never staked his own or Louise's happiness on this brilliant fortune. He always saw in prospect an humble presbytery, which no one else would care to have, and whither he would be sent for want of a better nominee, or possibly from some misgiving sense of wrong at the

thought of the wrong done to him. Provided only he had with him there his beloved Louise, he asked nothing more from the higher powers in the church.

The day that he went to say good-by his aunt and sister were unable to disguise their delight at what Verdelon's mediation had accomplished.

"He has been truly kind," said the old lady.

"What a generous disposition he has!" chimed in Louise, and a slight blush accompanied the exclamation, so like a quasi-confession of love, which none but her brother, who loved her so tenderly, could have detected.

"But it is for your sakes, understand, and not for his, that I have given in so far as to withhold my name from the pamphlet."

"Oh, we know that," said his aunt; "you might do more still," she added, timidly.

Julio managed to evade her appeal, being anxious to avoid all dispute with her in her delicate state of health.

It was arranged that any holidays he could obtain from his new duties should be spent at La Clavière. There was his library there—his private room—as retired as a hermitage, and those who loved him would be present to sweeten all.

Julio spun out this evening visit as long as he could. He visibly endeavored to compensate to the aunt he so tenderly loved for the anxiety he had caused her, while his unrestraint with Louise was a thorough refreshment to him. In the few moments of private conversation which the thoughtful old lady contrived that they should have he renewed to her those assurances of brotherly devotion which, when they are given by the upright and the brave, are never inconstant as those from inferior characters. From the very time that his struggles and persecutions commenced he had felt that he needed a heart full of sisterly sympathy to sustain him in his escape with a bruised and all but broken heart from that state of siege in which his formidable enemies were resolved to place him.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLICATION OF THE RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF CARDINAL DE FLAMMARENS.

VERDELON speedily paid his promised visit at La Clavière, drawn there, as is well known, by an irresistible attraction. Women are naturally inquisitive; and if he was welcomed heartily, both by the elder and the younger lady, it was doubtless owing, in some measure, to their anxiety to see the development of the drama in which Julio was so deeply involved. The question with them was, would that dreadful pamphlet appear? On that point, however, they felt tolerably confident: it remained to be considered whether, after important corrections, after additions tending to weaken its effect on the religious public, above all, after the name of the principal author had been withdrawn, it might

possibly escape the thunders of denunciation, and Julio an anathema. And this Verdelon, at his last visit, led them to hope.

He came full of smiles, bringing good news; Julio had been inflexible upon one point—that of maintaining, at all risks, the scrupulous fidelity which he had originally brought to his task, so that he might be the accurate interpreter of the thoughts of his illustrious master; but in every other particular he had been willing to yield. A prefatory note announced that, though the book was a correct record of the sentiments of the deceased cardinal, it was nevertheless submitted to the ecclesiastical authorities with every sentiment of deference and respect. Only Verdelon's name appeared at the end of the preface.

"Let us get it off our hands," Julio had said. "They want the copy to print: I'll send it to-day. The book will be out this week."

So the kind-hearted diplomatist had, to appearances, triumphed as far as possible. Indeed, he pressed upon them so earnestly the belief that there was nothing more to fear for Julio, in connection with the publication, that he began at last to believe it himself.

Country visits, even at a quiet, regular establishment like La Clavière, have their little necessary variations, and Madame de la Clavière naturally asked Verdelon to dinner. As she could not go any distance from her room with fatigue, the business of lionizing him over the pretty little English park with which the charming residence was surrounded, devolved upon Louise. This park was very dear to her: Julio had designed it, and she had watched over the carrying out of the plans. It was she who, at her brother's suggestions, had arranged the disposal of the plantations, and traced out the winding walks among the old trees. The keeping up the lawns, and the care of an artificial pond, stored with gold and silver fish, and constructed among the rocks and aquatic plants, so as to look like a little lake, were the favorite occupations of this graceful girl, whose beauty threw around her wherever she went an irresistible fascination.

Who could wonder at the girlish glee with which she wished to show off all these attractions? Verdelon, his heart throbbing with the ecstacy of first love, followed the simple, truthful, merry maid, beneath whose feet the grass blades scarcely bent, through those self-same spots that he had explored before when the painful struggle was going on in his bosom as to whether he should be a priest or not. There the imprudent youth had contemplated the charmer in all the bloom of her beauty, and had bared his spirit to those sweet influences of love which she was ever diffusing around her as flowers diffuse their perfume. The thought of her had had great weight in inducing him to return to the world; and now he might declare himself in the very place where the fire of his love had first been kindled. Twenty times the magic words, "Louise, I love you!" were on the tip

of his tongue; twenty times over, when the fair girl descanted on some supreme beauty of nature, Verdelon was all but ready to fall on his knees before her exclaiming, "Nature's masterpiece is yourself!" However, the word was left unspoken. Was it from that timidity which shrinks from a first avowal? or that high sense of honor dictating that Madame de la Clavière should be consulted first? Nothing of the sort. The human heart is full of strange contradictions. Verdelon felt confident that his love was returned. But already intoxicated with hopes of glory and fortune himself, with no other resources than those which he derived from his profession, he had entirely repudiated the idea of marrying any woman, however much he might love her, who hadn't a brilliant fortune. So there was a struggle within. Some expressions of Julio had led him to believe that Father Briffard had positive designs on the noble fortune of Madame de la Clavière. He knew the thorough disinterestedness of his friend; he knew even better the skill of the Jesuits in kidnapping fortunes without laying themselves open to successful prosecution. A lawsuit therefore for its recovery was not an agreeable prospect to a young man by no means ignorant of their powers of cajoling. All these thoughts passed through his mind like a breath of cold wind. Soft love-words were repressed by pounds, shillings, and pence; he was the courteous gentleman, she the dutiful niece, whose aunt must not be left too long—both mutual friends, who really ought to go back to the drawing-room.

The truth was, his love was enveloped in his interests; but nothing betrayed the hidden strife to the eyes of Louise. She, with the frank, guileless unreserve with which she had reveled in flowers and gold fish reveled in Augustus. As soon as he had taken leave and she had kissed her aunt and bade her good-night she retired to her room, almost stifled with sobs, her eyes overflowing with tears and her bosom heaving with emotions entirely new to her. One name, always the same—one image, no variety—were ever before her. She threw herself on her couch, conscious, for the first time, that she was over head and ears in love.

Meanwhile the editor of the new pamphlet, anxious to profit by its celebrity, had urged its publication with all possible dispatch. An immense pile of them arrived at T—. Great yellow posters covered the walls, and advertisements inserted in large print on the fourth page of the newspapers, gave to the book complete publicity. It was quite an event in the town. Copies were snatched up as fast as they appeared, and booksellers had to meet fresh applications with the answer that a second edition was on its way sufficiently large to meet all demands on the spot and in the neighborhood. The general curiosity had been so vividly excited that great interest was naturally aroused in the subject of the views which the work set forth. There were two sets—the literary, and independent. Educated men, disposed to smile on any thing at all

pretending to be intellectual in thought or style, spoke of it with interest. They praised the dead cardinal for the humble boldness with which he had made such an admission to so young a priest. They congratulated him on his good fortune in having his views recorded by one whose first sermon had placed him among the most distinguished orators of the land, and who promised to be equally conspicuous as an author. It was at once understood that though the work bore Verdelon's name it was in reality Julio's work; and Julio rose higher than ever in the estimation of these men for the fidelity with which he had recorded his old patron's opinions, and for the modesty with which he had waved all connection with the graceful production of his pen. "His conduct is admirable!" was the common judgment. If there were but many such among the clergy, what a mighty influence they would have in the world!

In other quarters, however, very different language was held. The cardinal's revolutionary ideas, his self-condemnation, his animadversions on the system pursued by the higher order of the clergy, the stinging chastisement which the book inflicted on the Jesuits, enraged the bigoted section of the community, and drove many to the wildest extremes of indignation. The most favorably disposed even of the clergy pronounced it a utopian affair—the delusion of a dying old man; while the authenticity of the pamphlet was questioned. Some complained that the Abbé Julio, the sole witness of the so-called confession, had not ventured to put his name; he had made use of that of a friend, knowing well that the whole thing was a fiction which he could disown when he chose by a simple denial. Anonymous letters deluged the humble fifth curate of St. Sernin. Some went so far in their charity as to treat him to even coarser abuse; others quietly threatened him with the flames of hell; while there were a few who sighed after the good old time—the brave days of the Inquisition, when this blasphemy of the Most High would have been summarily avenged, and the blasphemer chained to a stake in the Place du Capitole, where, surrounded by Jesuits and executioners, he might have laid down his accursed life in the midst of the flames. Of course Julio treated these pleasant amenities of the religious world much as they deserved.

Among these letters, by way of set-off to passionate ultramontane invectives, was one from the Bishop of A—, which it would be desirable to insert. Louis Augustus Delpont was one of the youngest bishops in France. He had known Julio well at T—, where he had been canon of the cathedral. His published argument against the eccentric views of the Abbé Gaume on the subject of classics, and a defense of the Gallican liturgy against Don Guéranger, abbé of Solesmes, derived from manuscripts left by the Cardinal d'Astros, the predecessor of the Cardinal du Flammarens, had rendered the Abbé Delpont a marked man. So when the Government, with whom the ultramontane party found

little favor, wanted a bishop for A——, they picked out the young canon, who, moreover, had been warmly recommended by the prefect of the Haut-Garonne as an enlightened, unpretending man of liberal sentiments, who would never make cause with a clerical faction whose antagonism was developing daily.

The bishop had kept up very friendly relations with Julio. His letter on the present occasion was in the following terms :

"MY VERY DEAR ABBÉ,—I have just received from T—— a singular publication. Though it does not bear your name, still its subject-matter, made known to you only, could not have been recorded by any one but yourself. You have acted very wisely in withholding your signature, as otherwise the book would have involved you in endless persecution. Dear Abbé, you are a brave man ; I can not help congratulating you on your high spirit and generous aspirations. I have wept over the humble confessions and noble thoughts of that dear old cardinal to whom I owe so much. Thanks for this charming book ; it shall be my *vade-mecum* ; and if I ever yield to those failings which this good man deplores in the immediate prospect of appearing before his Judge, this pamphlet will recall me to self-respect and a due sense of the dignity of my office.

"Please keep my letter a profound secret, or, better still, burn it as soon as you have read it. I am surrounded with gentlemen who have an average allowance of fanaticism, and were I to be at war with them I should destroy all my influence as bishop without in any way furthering the cause of truth. This is a time of painful transition. Fools must have their day, and when the world has had enough of their absurdities we shall of necessity relapse into moderation and good sense. I am sufficiently juvenile as a bishop to hope that that day may dawn in my own lifetime. We may well afford to leave Gaume, Veuillot, and others of the same kidney, to their pitiful work of stirring up religious animosities, while we grasp the olive of peace, in readiness for that day when men will have begun to discover that our Lord Jesus Christ is not a Jupiter Tonans, but the Lamb of God sent into the world full of grace and truth.

"Adieu, dear Abbé! Be strong and very courageous. You are a bold man, but don't be hasty. Meantime my prayer shall be that certain grievous wolves in the bosom of the Church may not be permitted to tear you with their cruel teeth. Once more ; strict and perpetual silence, I entreat you, on the subject of this letter. I should never forgive you if you breathe the fact of my having written it, even to your most intimate friend.

"My love and blessing, dear Abbé,

"LOUIS AUGUSTUS,
"Bishop of A——."

This letter was a balm to Julio's gentle and sensitive spirit ; yet it did but precede the tempest, as drops of tender rain herald the avalanche

of the angry storm. It will be readily understood that the Jesuits set no bounds to their wrath when they found they could not stop the issue of the detested publication. They dispatched envoy after envoy—all men of mark in the town—to the poor terrified archbishop, with the same old appeal—"Monseigneur, have you read this book ? Is it not horrible ? Ought not this unprincipled priest, who has presumed to write such things, to be visited with an interdict ? Monseigneur, the whole town is bristling with indignation at the scandal."

The archbishop, whose temper naturally was none of the sweetest, fairly boiled over at these renewed assaults. He made no secret of his indignation at the work. He gave reiterated assurances that he would make the author smart for it. It was a day of triumph for the sons of St. Ignatius. The rascal who had attacked their holy order would pay dear for his whistle—would be expelled from the diocese—and serve as a wholesome warning to any one who should dream, in after-time, of attempting to unveil their skillful tactics, or expose their ambition to the world.

Four lines—of studied brevity and most caustic rudeness—arrived at the presbytery of St. Sernin, requiring Julio to present himself at the palace the next day, at twelve o'clock punctually.

A night's reflection is never lost, especially on men accustomed, by a long habit of caution, to be on their guard against first impressions. The archbishop had learned, in the brief interval after the receipt of those angry protests, that Julio's book was valued highly in the literary world. It had been ascertained that the work had excited an enthusiastic feeling in favor of a priest capable of producing such a masterpiece of thought and diction, and that his name was in every body's mouth. It had reached his ears, moreover, that the Cardinal de Flammarens was extolled to the skies at this posthumous revelation of his sentiments, which had thrilled, with the interest of a romance, the minds of educated men. Would it not, then, be imprudent, he argued with himself, to outrage the general feeling of a large town in favor of an opposition to ideas which were, after all, matters for difference of opinion, and which (as he himself felt) infringed in no way on the doctrines of the Church—which every bishop is pledged to uphold in his diocese ?

So he resolved at once to please both parties. He proceeded at once to cast about for a middle course, by which he might empower himself to assure his clergy and the fanatical party, with affected adherence to their feelings, that he had severely rebuked the offender, and forced him to submission, though he was unwilling to adopt the extreme measure of extorting from him a degrading recantation.

The scene, however, was absolutely terrible when Julio entered the archiepiscopal sanctum with the serenity of a conscience thoroughly at ease.

"So, so, Sir, you have written a most outrageous book?"

"Monseigneur, I am at a loss to understand you."

"I tell you that this book of yours—in which you make my excellent predecessor the speaker—is most disgraceful."

"Monseigneur, I have nothing to say to your opinion of it; but if I have recorded faithfully the sentiments and utterances of the late cardinal, I repeat that I can not understand how my book can be disgraceful."

"Enough, Sir; enough. You forget to whom you are speaking. It's idle to attempt to palm off such assertions on me. Your object has been to earn a reputation for yourself, and to use a great name for pushing forward your own."

"I swear, monseigneur, in the presence of that God who hears us both, that there is not a word in these pages which is not the cardinal's; and, apart from those differences of style which are unavoidable when one man reproduces the thoughts of another, I assure you with equal solemnity that I have added nothing to what fell from his lips. If I reproached myself at all it would be with having diluted the strength of his sentiments and expressions."

"Then you ought never to have recorded it. You shall pay dear for having yielded to this miserable temptation to rush into print, since you acknowledge that the publication is yours."

"I am quite ready to suffer whatever disgrace or ignominy may await me, monseigneur; but having received the commands of a dying man, and pledged my honor, I was bound to discharge the obligation and keep my word."

"But the faith, Sir, the faith!"

"I am not to judge the faith of Monseigneur de Flammarens. He was my superior, and I never dared to impugn it."

"Exactly—the faith of an old man in a fit of apoplexy. You listened to the wanderings of his mind when he was delirious. You enriched them out of your own imagination, my poor Abbé, and you have plenty of that. It's just this and nothing more, do you see?"

"Pardon me, monseigneur, it's true I am very young; but I have studied a little those medical questions which concern our ministry, and I positively affirm that never had a man more complete possession of all his faculties than the cardinal on recovering from his first stroke. You may assure yourself on that head by appealing to Dr. Pench, whom you would not suspect of an untruth."

"Well, even admitting all that, this book can not be allowed to rest where it is. It has scandalized the religious world. There are sentiments in it which verge upon heresy."

"Monseigneur, I am neither archbishop, Pope, nor church. I have simply discharged a duty toward a dying man. Chastise his doctrines if you will; that is your business. Archbishop and cardinal though he was, the Church is the judge of his opinions. But separate between

the sentiments of the prelate, and the humble individual who has recorded those sentiments, whose orthodoxy it was not his province to discuss."

The archbishop appeared a little softened and somewhat convinced by Julio's last appeal.

"If I understand you rightly, then, you are willing to submit to whatever judgment the Pope may pronounce on this book, which you attribute to Monseigneur de Flammarens?"

"With all my heart, monseigneur."

"Be it so, then; let the matter rest there. Give me a declaration to this effect under your hand."

"At once, monseigneur."

And the archbishop, as soon as he was placed in a tenable position by this document, dismissed Julio with apparent kindness. The same evening, however, a great concourse of clergy whom he knew to be devoted to the Jesuits, being assembled in his drawing-room, he made a great talk of the severe reprimand he had administered to "that infatuated young priest." He added that, being unwilling to destroy his prospects forever, he had compassionated his youth, and contented himself with an explicit retraction, which shifted the responsibility of judging the matter from his own shoulders to a synod at Rome of his episcopal brethren.

That last phrase was his secret reliance. It was thoroughly significant. The master had spoken.

CHAPTER V.

A CARMELITE AGED SIXTEEN.

THE priestly version of the issue of Julio's connection with the pamphlet was speedily noised abroad in the town. Those given to sheltering their misdeeds under the cloak of authority were not slow in proclaiming that the abbé had been severely rebuked by the archbishop, and only retained his office from the good prelate's compassion for his youth and inexperience. Others, wiser in their generation, perceived the archbishop's drift, and continued to show the greatest attention to the young curate. The world in general, not being given to ecclesiastical subtleties, rejoiced in the creditable way in which Julio had come out of the dispute. They knew that the archbishop's decision had been arrived at as a matter of prudence, and was paraded before the priestly party as an act of clemency; and they held it to be merely just and right. So the tempest calmed down by degrees; and as Julio, incapable of vindictive feeling, was as kindly and cordial to all as he had ever been, his enemies appeared to be disarmed, and peace to be restored to that unobtrusive life devoted so nobly to the care of the poor, the suffering, and the destitute.

This quiet time, however, was not of long duration. The discord, which had only veiled itself, soon revived. Julio's enemies saw that he was simple and straightforward in all he

said, and incapable even of those harmless devices by which malice is thwarted, and occasion removed whereon their reproaches might fasten.

Two circumstances, which, in the case of any one else, would have passed by unnoticed, were dragged forward and grossly misrepresented by his malicious opponents. The Jesuit spies, as may readily be supposed, never left him. His private life, his visits, his ministerial utterances, in the sacristy of St. Sernin, even in the confessional, his intercourse with Verdelon, with general society in the town, all were reported daily at the establishment of the Inquisition.

An event of considerable importance was at this time creating a great stir in T——. Even the largest provincial towns are like little villages, where, failing political excitement and anxiety as to the condition of the country at large, no revolution being communicated by telegraph, and the prophecies of inspired females announcing a sudden destruction of Paris by a celestial judgment similar to that which befell the Cities of the Plain, being as yet unrealized, the next best occupation is to collect gossip, and scandal, and all the various adventures of which chambermaids and housekeepers are full.

The story at this present abroad was as follows: A charming young girl, an angel aged sixteen, belonging to a wealthy family in the town, was on the point of forsaking the world, not with a view of devoting herself to the care of the sick and poor in a hospital, but of entombing herself alive in a Carmelite convent. The tale, increasing as it circulated, developed itself at last into a small romance, which traversed the town, creating various impressions according to the various opinions of those who heard it.

This child had had as her spiritual guide from her earliest years a certain Carmelite priest, by name Athanasius. Her entire knowledge of the world might be summed up under three heads—her father's house, her parish church, and the chapel of the Carmelites. Father Athanasius, the confessor of the girl's mother, had had no trouble in persuading her that God demanded from her, as from Abraham, the voluntary sacrifice of her daughter. Two years ago he had solemnly announced that this was her divinely appointed destiny. The father, a worthy Christian man, a member of the vestry of St. Sernin, was not exactly disposed to take this view of matters; but being rather irresolute, he dreaded the anger of his wife, who would tolerate no trifling with the Carmelite's decision. Moreover, he was afraid of the opinion of the bigoted party, so powerful in the town, and was loth to be pointed at by priests and enthusiasts as having opposed the proper calling of his child. One day, however, at the vicarage of St. Sernin, at the close of a vestry meeting, he consulted with Julio, for whom he had conceived a very high respect, and whose zeal in the discharge of his sacred office he had frequently observed. But his desire to resist the threatened step went no further; and in spite of the earnest entreaty

of Julio reminding him of his right as a parent, and filling him with lively apprehensions for the future, he allowed his child to follow the bent of her inclination.

The religious world commented enthusiastically on this instance of self-sacrifice in one so young. The mystics recalled the earliest ages of the Church, when even little children lived the cloistered life. They reckoned greatly, too, on the influence such an example would have in alluring young people from the world to a similar course.

Meanwhile, men of sober thought and matured mind bewailed the want of judgment which was leading the priests of all the various societies to immure in their convents young girls who knew nothing of the world, and were utterly disqualified to decide between a married or single life. There were others who were greatly amused at the penetration of Father Athanasius in discovering in a child of fourteen a vocation for the austerities of a Carmelite life. Young men were exasperated at the fondness of religious orders for hurrying society into a parcel of convents. "They are taking away all the marriageable girls," they said; "when shall we be rid of these bothering monks?" It was well known that a young man of most distinguished family, and whose friends were on terms of intimacy with those of the novice, had been violently attached to her, and that the two fathers had for a long time favored the idea of a marriage between a pair so suited to each other in age and circumstances. "The family is ruining itself," they exclaimed; "a father's authority goes for nothing. A highly-enlightened individual comes forth from his cell to settle the gravest interests of outside life. He lords it over wives and mothers whom the Gospel and the Church have solemnly invested with the right of governing their families as reason and experience require."

Excitement was up to boiling pitch on every side, when the news went forth that the day on which this young girl was to take the veil was irrevocably fixed for the 1st March, 1859. The vicar of St. Sernin, a venerable old man, who had baptized her, was to preside on the occasion, for which great preparations were being made. The chapel of the Carmelites was draped with hangings of dazzling white. Garlands of white roses adorned the altar screen, and the cornices of the pillars, and encircled the pedestal of the pulpit. Innumerable tapers, arranged symmetrically before the altar, produced an effect of fairyland. Of course the preacher of the day was to be Father Athanasius.

And now a numerous and select audience has filled the chapel. The tapers shine; the office of the Church is being solemnly chanted by the recluses hidden behind a black railing in the innermost part of the building, bristling with long iron spikes, and covered on the monastery side with a thick curtain. The postulant, gorgeously attired in bridal dress, is on her knees on a *prie Dieu* in the choir. Her sponsors stand on

her right and left, charged with handing her over to the Carmelites. Two enormous lights, encircled with roses, burn on either side of her. The father and mother are in front of the inclosure reserved for the families invited. All eyes are fixed on the child, and the look of amazement is universal. It is hard to believe that one so little can be sixteen years old; and each one asks himself with a painful anxiety, scarcely restrained even by the sanctity of the place, how that young thing would ever be able to brave the fearful rigor of the life she has chosen.

The last clouds of incense were ascending to the vault of the chapel, creating, as they diffused their enwreathed volumes, that uncertain twilight so strange in its influence over enthusiastic spirits.

The celebrant, preceded by the clergy, laid aside his sacerdotal vestments in the sacristy. Father Athanasius prepared to mount the pulpit, and the audience, before arranging themselves in front, so as better to hear what he had to say, cast one more look of winning tenderness on the little one who had resumed her seat, and with colorless cheeks and downcast eyes was awaiting the exhortation to be delivered to her by her spiritual father at this eventful moment.

Soon there was a deep silence, when suddenly an unusual disturbance attracts universal notice. All rise and turn their gaze in the direction of the sacristy. Then there is a great stir among the clergy, and loud confusion. No one can understand what the uproar means, or what is happening. Reverence for the place forbids conversation, but anxious inquiring glances are freely interchanged. The celebrant beckons the father to come to him. Evidently he is called to decide in some matter of the greatest importance. Silence again after the violent disturbance.

In a few moments the father returns to his seat. The priests, with a sort of scared look, and trying in vain to conceal their bewilderment, resume their places in the sanctuary. Five minutes of painful suspense ensue. Suddenly the outer door looking to the pulpit is thrown open, but no Father Athanasius appears to the astounded audience. It is the Abbé Julio. Having knelt down reverently for a moment, he rose and spoke as follows:

"MY CHILD,—A most painful circumstance, which you will hear of in a few moments, has led me, at the request of the reverend superior of this convent, and also of your excellent father, to address you on an occasion destined to influence forever your future life. My task is simple and easy. You are prepared to consecrate to God your youth and your entire being; and it is among the daughters of St. Theresa—to a career marked by the utmost austerity and mortification—that you are about to consummate this sacrifice.

"Your idea is sublime, and there is no one present but unites with me in admiring such

heroic courage in one so weak. Happy the mother who has given such a child to the Church! Happy child!—like another St. Agnes, who in the days of persecution never flinched from her executioners as she uttered the energetic words, 'I am a Christian!' Wherefore I should falsify the inmost feelings of my soul, and even the sacred trust of my office, did I not emphatically say, 'Daughter, you have done well!'

"At the same time we, who lay before you the prudence of the Church and her counsels to wise deliberation, are constrained to set side by side with the encouragements due to so early a self-dedication, that salutary advice which may well admonish you in your, perhaps, too hasty resolve.

"If there are examples of like sacrifice to yours, and time has proved that they were inspired by God, I am in duty bound to tell you, at the same time, that these examples are becoming rarer and rarer. And now I ask you, are you thoroughly convinced that yours is one of those exceptional cases?

"And I ask you further, would that present desire of yours depart, if, instead of precipitating your entrance into a living tomb, you took some years to try yourself before the world, of which then you would have a riper experience, as to whether you are really called upon to bid it farewell for ever?

"And once more I would ask, whether, frail and delicate as you are, you think it would be wise to inflict on yourself the rough discipline of severe penance, which is the absolute essential of a convent life?"

After having thus propounded his chief question, the orator, in a series of glowing sentences, unfolded to his audience the great truth that common paths are safest; that the sublimest calling was a mother's; that the Middle Ages, in aiming to palm off as the acme of a Christian life cloistered seclusion, with its accompanying scourgings and isolation, had caricatured the true idea of real perfection; that those notions which had excited heroic spirits and produced saints suited a time when it was necessary to arrest the popular attention by the spectacle of a fearful austerity, and had little hold on a world which, returning to another and less dismal creed, preferred the giving a cup of cold water to the needy, the care of little ones, the instruction of outcasts, ministering to the sick, before hair-cloths, self-lacerations, and iron chains.

Again addressing the girl, he gave her to understand that she was entering an order which, in addition to its pre-eminent rigor, aided in no way the development of human activity, and perpetuating thus the most ultra traditions of the mediæval period, made no allowance for that exuberant tendency of youth to vent itself in those innocent enjoyments in which abundant feeling finds a ready outlet.

"The sister of charity," he observed, in conclusion, "renounces one family only to create for herself another, in a long experience amidst surrounding distress. If it be true that God

should have all our love, there is still, by the very constitution of our being, a law we can not evade. In part, our affections belong to the sphere which surrounds us. The sister of charity does but diffuse that affection over a more extended class of objects. She does not love them all with the mighty love that binds a mother to her children, but she does not the less satisfy, in a thousand unknown ways, that yearning of the soul which, if it be denied exercise, consigns it to empty regrets, or a mournful barrenness of heart."

His peroration was simple and touching.

"My poor child, you do indeed challenge our sympathy! Is it possible to regard you unmoved—arrayed for a fête which in a few hours will be the commencement of a life-long agony? There are great weaknesses in the human heart—in the hearts even of those guileless spirits which are most conscious of worthlessness before God! How do you know that, even supposing in a few months, before pronouncing the irrevocable vows, you had the courage to crush out these instincts, though your conscience would not summon you to the task, there might not enter even then into your soul a whisper, warning you that you had been too hasty, that you had followed the impulse of an unenlightened zeal? My child, this would be fearful! There is time yet! Under the care of a pious mother, and the watchful eye of the kindest and best of fathers, you may yet learn more of the world and more of yourself! In two years or in three years hence, this asylum would be as open to you as it is to-day. Your physical system itself, strengthened by air and exercise and the freedom of home-life, would be better able to sustain the severities of discipline and chastisement. You would lose nothing of the favor of God, and you would have given a few more years of happiness to a tender parent, who, should you then resolve, as you do now, might perchance regard your sacrifice with a weaker regret.

"My child, I say once more, there is time yet. If one ray of light, hitherto undetected by you, has shone in upon your real thoughts, and made you shrink from a rash decision, halt, I pray you! Shatter the altar, and save the victim!"

An utterly indescribable emotion seized the entire congregation. Multitudes, for the most part, illustrate the proverb, "How forcible are right words!" and though there were a few gloomy bigots present, in whose ears Julio's words had seemed a tissue of blasphemies, and an attack upon the sanctity of religious orders, yet the whole assembly, apart from their individual convictions, felt that what he had said was just—that the child would suffer nothing—so far as her vocation was concerned, if she continued true to it—by returning for a little longer to her mother's care; while she would gain infinitely by avoiding a rash dedication of herself to a convent life, if, on reaching maturer years, she decided, after all, that her proper calling was in an opposite direction.

Strange to say, the mother herself, who had almost urged on this unnatural sacrifice, so long as Father Athanasius retained her under his influence, suddenly veered round, and probing her conscience (for she was, after all, an upright woman), discovered that she had succumbed to extravagant fanaticism. "My child," she said to the young girl, who consulted her with a glance, "you are free;" and, emboldened by this decision, the father added, in a loud voice, "Don't you think we had better go home?"

The effect produced in the chapel by this original occurrence was of the very highest sensational order. Obviously the holy sisters behind the railing were in the dark in every sense. The next moment the father had ordered a cab to the convent door for his wife and daughter, while he himself in a brief interview explained to the superior that he preferred waiting a little longer, if it was all the same to him, before he deposited his child on the Carmelite altar.

The public, attracted by any thing in the shape of sight-seeing, were edified by the spectacle of the young girl issuing forth in her bridal attire, and leaning on the arm of her mother. There was an almost irrepressible burst of applause; and what finished off the whole affair, and made it the completest thing in dramas, was the news that Father Athanasius had been seized with a terrible attack of apoplexy just as he was on the point of entering the pulpit.

It is easy to imagine the noise that this incident created in the town. Innumerable complaints against Julio were forwarded to the palace without delay.

"A man who had used such expressions should be immediately interdicted," was the form they took.

The archbishop, pressed on all sides, promised an inquiry; and by this evasion extricated himself once more. The Jesuits, the Carmelite Friars, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and all the religious orders in T——, wept loud and long. "The clergy had come to this," they said, "open denunciation from the pulpit of a religious vocation. If the archbishop allowed the offender to escape, other measures must be taken; in point of fact, there must be an appeal to the Pope."

Their wrath knew no bounds when, a few months afterward, it was announced, in due form, that M. Charles de Beaubrun had just married Jeanne-Eléonore de Létéil.

The new bride was none other than the Carmelite novice at whose intended betrothal (of quite another kind) Julio had preached; and this same incorrigible Julio had, in the church of St. Sernin, bestowed on this same young couple the nuptial benediction!

CHAPTER VI.

A SERMON ON LOVE.

JULIO had now become the object of the implacable hatred of the so-called religious world.

Absorbed in his studies and each day's parish work, he failed to perceive the extent to which this flame of animosity was being fanned by the enraged monks; but his friends were not so blind. Verdelen, especially, gave him a hint on the matter. Besides his sincere esteem for Julio, his love for Louise made him wish earnestly that the young priest would give up a warfare that could only injure his career, and follow that course which, in the case of one so talented as he was, would inevitably be attended with honor and reward.

But Julio, tractable as he was, could not so easily revolutionize his ardent and impulsive nature. He loved the pulpit; and there, in those flights of an unfettered fancy, the peculiar revels of genius, he would fling himself, from time to time, into transports of eloquence, whose influence on others was electrical—all unable to understand how a religion, which, to him, appeared so righteous and sublime, could be presented to the multitude as pitiful and low.

There was in the town a free school, founded by a professor of the university, greatly esteemed in the south. The studies pursued in it were very advanced, and at the time of which we are writing it was in a most flourishing condition. Notwithstanding popular prejudices, and more especially in disregard of the Jesuits, who had established, in their college, a series of classes intended to be preparatory for the Government schools, many eminent families placed their sons under the able tuition of M. Maigreux. The most select of the southern youth was there at this time; and, as much from his personal sympathies as from motives of interest, the master gave up a large portion of his time to religious instruction. It had even been remarked in the town that the greater part of those who had grown up to be good men had been the pupils of this worthy instructor, and had never darkened the doors of the Jesuit college.

As may be expected, this astute preceptor summoned to his assistance, in the spiritual training of his charge, whatever enlightened clergymen were to be found in the town. The Abbé Julio was invited to hold meetings every Thursday in his house; and these speedily became the rage of T—. Magistrates, professors, and distinguished men of every class, deemed it a privilege to be present on these occasions, on which Julio exhibited powers that could only have been guessed at from his first sermon. The intelligent youth of the town craved admission. So the place of meeting was changed, and an immense hall, used at the prize distributions, and capable of accommodating nearly 2000 persons, was improvised as a chapel.

The great success of these gatherings excited even more the jealous hatred of these men who had made it their hateful business to ruin the young priest. An extempore sermon of his on love, and which his friends and enemies alike had most carefully taken down, excited so much interest that it became the talk of the town. The Jesuits had at that time at the cathedral

one of their most eminent preachers, and they had left no stone unturned to secure Father Le Pampre a large congregation. Enthusiastic Jesuit ladies—those in particular who were in love with the reverend gentleman's fat, rosy cheeks—thronged St. Stephen's; but men of position and intelligence stuck to the Thursdays at M. Maigreux's.

Stung to fury by this circumstance, the Jesuits (as may be supposed) abused the orator who had done them so much harm, they said, with unusual simplicity, by his assemblies. They constituted a most formidable clique among their bigoted adherents, at the head of which they placed an old magistrate, a rabid zealot, already in his second childhood, but who, from his fortune, antecedents, and family position, was a man of great influence in the town. Acting on this invariable plan, they took good care to keep in the back-ground themselves, commissioning this venerable individual to wait on the archbishop with a numerous deputation from the various churches, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and others of the pious faithful.

The Jesuits forwarded to the magistrate a copy of an extract from a sermon of Julio's on love, which had produced a considerable sensation, and furnished him with instructions for his audience; setting forth that such teaching was calculated to corrupt the youth of the town, and was more fitted for temples of Venus than for Christian churches. The old man, carefully crammed up in the story he was to tell, observed to the archbishop that the Catholics of T—, whom he had the honor of representing on that occasion, while declaring their profound respect for his highness, were determined to shrink from no measure, even the extreme step of bringing the matter before the Pope, rather than suffer the Christian youth of the town to be poisoned by false teaching. They trusted that the archbishop would not pass over such proceedings with ill-timed clemency, or force the deputation, and those in whose name they appeared, to the adoption of the course he had indicated.

The Jesuits had reckoned on the telling effect of that threat. They knew the archbishop, and felt confident that he would not hesitate between his desire for the hat and the sacrifice of a poor priest.

The archbishop seemed perplexed. He took the manuscript, and read a few lines of the sermon referred to.

"Very bad indeed, gentlemen; can not be tolerated; you are quite right; I will satisfy your most reasonable expectations; but you know that there are certain formalities to be observed."

They withdrew perfectly satisfied. Julio was done for. Returning to his study, the archbishop read the paper eagerly, hunting for a pretext on which to ground his punishment. Either because his intellect was not of the highest order, or under the influence of the threat he

had just heard, the sermon appeared to him dangerous in the extreme; he was greatly excited, and dashing it down on the table, cried out—

“The young people shall never be exposed to such pulpit-teaching as this!”

And in his rage, half real, half feigned, he called his secretary and ordered him to see if there were not some obscure living vacant in the most savage valleys of the Pyrenees; adding, with bitter irony, that he had a young pastor whom he wanted to send there to preach his idea of love to mountain shepherds.

The living of Saint Aventin, in the valley of L'Arboust, proved to be disposable.

The next day Julio was summoned to the palace, and received with marked sternness. The archbishop, almost flinging at him his new title of vicar of St. Aventin, gave him a long lecture on the pretended scandals he had occasioned; cutting him short on any attempt at explanation, and forbidding him ever to return to T—, except for the ecclesiastical retreats, when he would do well to appoint himself severe penance.

“I appoint you vicar of St. Aventin,” he said. “Had I done as numbers have urged me to do, I should have interdicted you this very day. I tell you this, not with a view of proving that I have claims on your gratitude, but to convince you that I am just. If among the poor mountaineers, and in that climate freshened by the glacier, you can manage to calm down your imagination, and save me any more complaints of your extravagances, I shall thank God. That exile, severe as it may seem to you, will have proved beneficial; you will become rational like other men, and I shall have saved many a scandal to the Church. Go, Sir. I give you two entire days to arrive at your parish. The vicar of Luchon will receive a letter from me to institute you on Sunday next. He is a sensible and pious man. I recommend him to you as a confessor. You would do well to take his advice.”

And so saying he dismissed him.

The departure of Julio from St. Sernin, and his exile to the mountains, was soon the talk of the town. It was pretty well understood that the Thursday meetings, and more particularly the sermon on love, had been at the bottom of this harshness. The daily paper recorded minutely all that had happened: the deputation sent to the archbishop by the Jesuits, who were concealed behind the curtain during the audience; the threats hurled at his highness; and, thanks to the secretary, who had overheard the whole conversation, the words addressed to Julio with such ill-deserved severity.

If the zealots triumphed, the archbishop suffered in equal proportion in the estimation of sensible men. He was accused of having forwarded the vengeance of the Jesuits, of having listened to the hypocritical complaints of men who knew perfectly well that Julio's words, on which they founded their charge, so far from be-

ing culpable, contained the only sound advice suitable to the position of young men passing from the discipline of school to the temptations of real life. This sermon, a fragment of which had occasioned such an outcry among the fanatics, passed through endless editions, and was read greedily in drawing-rooms as a graceful work, equally refined in thought and language, and only to be compared with one of the essays of Lacordaire.

The next day visiting cards poured in in shoals upon Julio, by way of quiet protest against so unjust a disgrace; which served only, however, to bring out more forcibly than ever his serenity and unselfishness. The young men of T—, in particular, saw that they had been the innocent causes of this persecution. A deputation of them and of the various schools went to thank him for the good he had done them; and the *Eagle* of T— inserted in its impression for that day the speeches made on the occasion, adding:

“Here is an answer to those who pretend that the youth of our schools are thoroughly irreligious.”

The article in question terminated as follows:

“We regret to announce that the Abbé Julio, the author of those brilliant prelections of which we have just been speaking, has been appointed vicar of some out-of-the-way village in the Valley of Arboust. This appointment, generally regarded in the light of a disgrace, has produced a decided sensation here.

“The young priest will carry with him the unanimous regrets of the town of T—, where he is beloved for his exemplary character, and admired for his distinguished abilities.”

But the newspaper did not add that the young people on returning from their visit to Julio, by the establishment of the Inquisition, had raised the significant cry of “Down with the Jesuits!”

At the very moment that Julio was taking leave of them a letter was brought to him from one of the most distinguished professors of the town. It expressed to him the general feeling of profound regret at the departure of so distinguished a man, and one from whom so much was expected in the rotten condition of the Church.

The writer implored him, before he acted on the order he had received, seriously to ask himself whether he ought to give way before such deadly enemies; whether the present crisis was not an intimation from Providence, summoning him to the highest destinies. His removal to another sphere might be the means of setting him at once to a task in which he would receive the sympathies of all who believed in the future of Catholicism, its reconciliation with the spirit of the age. On the other hand, the general opinion was, that should he go to St. Aventin he would banish himself effectually from the moving spirits of the day, and, absorbed in the labors of an obscure ministry among a few mountaineers, snowed up for eight months of the year, and worn out by the privations of a bleak climate, would relinquish forever the sublime task whose nature he had so thoroughly ap-

prehended, and the programme of which he had traced in such glowing language in his sermon at the cathedral, as well as in his various prelections.

The writer urged further, that instead of setting out for mountain solitudes, he ought to assert his independence, thank the archbishop, apply for a certificate which couldn't be refused, set off to Paris, and when there advance himself by speaking and writing. He implored him not to listen at such a moment to his own modesty or fear of the troubles of a controversial life. Engaged in such a holy cause, he ought to recognize no other voices than those of his own conscience and of God.

"Would you recoil from this brilliant future," he urged, in conclusion, "with all your earnestness and faith? Would you have those who love you believe in their soul that you have but vague aspirations, and that your character is not sufficiently strong to bear down opposition and encounter martyrdom in the espousal of a holy service?"

At the moment when this letter came Julio was preparing to pay a visit to La Clavière, that he might pass the few hours left to him by the tyrannical archbishop with his aunt and Louise.

Cautiously as he broke the news of his fate to his old aunt the blow was scarcely softened at all. It was impossible not to see in it a proof of the resoluteness with which the Jesuits were hunting him down. As for Louise, for the first time in her life she ventured to say, in tones of extreme indignation, "That's the work of the Jesuits and the monks!"

The brother's and sister's separation was heart-rending; for though another passion was deep down in Louise's heart, her affection for her brother, quite of another kind, and quite as powerful in its strength and tenacity, remained undiminished.

"Our poor aunt gets weaker every day," said Julio. "God alone knows whether our greedy persecutors will leave us any fortune; but whatever happens, remember that your brother's home is open to you."

The poor girl took in at a glance the horrors of her position, if the threatened spoliation was carried out, as her worst fears led her to expect; she saw at once, with a woman's prescience, her blighted future. Verdelon would never marry a penniless orphan; nor would his heart follow her to the mountains: then what prospect could there be for her but that of being completely forgotten, and of exchanging her brilliant city life for the dreariness of a mountain exile in the home of an all but interdicted priest?

Julio had to leave La Clavière the next morning to return to T—, for the purpose of collecting his books and furniture before proceeding to St. Aventin. He bade farewell to his aunt with an earnestness which seemed to say that it would prove a last adieu. Louise protracted her parting interview with her brother far into the night. She left him at about twelve, that she might no longer shorten his rest.

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No sooner was Julio alone than he took out his friend's letter, advising him to refuse the living of St. Aventin, and answered it as follows:

"*La Clavière*, 1859.

"Your letter, my dear Sir, reached me yesterday just when I was quitting T—, on a sorrowful parting visit to my dear aunt and sister.

"Do not fancy that I recoil from the afflictive mission which it has pleased God to intrust to me. Persecution still hallows it, and ever will. Harassed by injustice and hate, I feel invigorated nevertheless for my great task; for God ever supports the martyr in the presence of his enemies.

"Your view, so warmly and so flatteringly conveyed to me, has struck myself more than once; but there is a grave consideration on the other side, the full force of which I hope you will see.

"I am very young—I need hard work and protracted study. With all my vehement longings I know I want ballast, and this I hope to have in time, counteracting the too ardent tendencies of youth toward whatever is enthusiastic and imaginative. Shall I confess to you that even though I see, or think I see, the end of the present state of things—though I may discern clearly the sufferings of Catholicism, her deep decline, the abyss into which ignorant scribes, flatterers, and selfish or stupid desperadoes, are dragging her—though I am confident that I shall witness before long the last crumbling away of that worm-eaten edifice which history may call the Church of the Middle Ages—I am not yet sufficiently practical to aid in collecting the relics of the old system, and constructing a new.

"At the present moment Italy, all but in a blaze, is preparing for a revolution. Papal Rome is witnessing the dying splendors of the temporal power, while the Catholic clergy have been slumbering over the remembrance of the past, without foreseeing that sorrowful decline which must follow such protracted inactivity.

"They are at length awaking, amazed to find the world ahead of them. Men have grown, and priests can't understand, or won't, why grown men discard the worn-out nursery talk which they used as infants.

"It is easy to see that there will be a break-up in Italy. How the revolution will be occasioned I can not say; but it will inevitably take place. The upper clergy, hating intuitively all reform, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will join issue in the fight. And since experience never teaches corporations, it will struggle to the end in its pig-headed opposition to change. Nor will it shrink from incurring popular hatred. The struggle will be furious. Rome will have her anathemas—old weapons which she herself thinks little of now, yet uses as a species of bugbear. Then will come the final crash, and the old religious world of Hildebrand will be buried in the dust.

"A period, I think, not very far off—five or

six years, at the most—for the last slow pulses of expiring papacy. I would seize this interval for retirement, hoping to emerge from my retreat when the Catholic world, dismayed at the final throes of the struggle, has learned the wisdom of constituting a new order of things on the ruins of the old.

“This, then, is the reason why I would rather not waste my youth in a warfare distressing to myself and futile in every respect. I do not care to be a destructive, for I trust the demolition of abuses to the clumsiness of those who are endeavoring to sustain them.

“As long as the old temporal power exists at Rome, it would be absurd to attempt any reform in the spiritual. Even the mildest improvements would be regarded as audacious attacks on the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. Nor is it, indeed, partial changes that the Church requires. But so soon as the sceptre has passed away, with the secular administration, then will be the time to work up a new order, to be developed in all its real glory.

“Not but what I anticipate, even at so favorable a juncture as that, some little difficulty; but since the Church stands out incapable of decay, surrounded by the ruins of institutions founded by the ages, and not by God, she will find within herself, disenthralled from the spell of medievalism, the elements of a new order—sure guarantee of a new life in the time to come.

“And now, I trust, you understand the wisdom of my resolve to reserve myself for the holy

and beautiful task of rebuilding—a task, however, that will have its unpleasantness, when we think of the rubbish to be cleared away; but, if its labors, its full reward; whereas, to talk of such a work now, would be sacrilege. Furious opposition to the idea would start up on every side. ‘How dare you lay your hand on the ark of God?’

“Might I ask you to think over this new aspect of the religious question. In the bitter tears with which bigotry is bedewing her beloved past—in the extent to which she swears at her foes—in the blotches of persecuting hate with which her flag is befouled—you may discover tokens of her coming fall. We who anticipate the glorious work of the Church’s thorough restitution can well afford to wait.

“Be assured of my lively gratitude for the kind sympathy you have manifested toward me. He who watches over the bird of the air will not overlook the exile of St. Aventin. JULIO.”

The same evening he set out for his mountain home. Will they leave him long at peace in his far-off retreat? Will not that spirit which can not let honest priests alone, or such as dare at all to think, track him out, through the obliging aid of spies, and worry once more his useful, blameless life? Will the benevolent disciples of Loyola be able to keep away from St. Aventin?

And Julio himself, what are his opinions on this matter?

PART III.

A PRESBYTERY IN THE MOUNTAIN.

CHAPTER I.

EXTRACTS FROM JULIO'S DIARY.

"August, 1859.

"I HAVE been here a month. The place is small and poor, but I feel already I shall get used to it. A worthy old soul, whose honesty is asserted by the whole village, will come every day to cook my chop and dust my rooms. My tastes are simple. I'm easily satisfied.

"Having made these arrangements my anxieties are at an end.

"Some strange destiny, like the blast of a wandering wind, has borne me to this hidden mountain village from the active, intelligent life of a great town. Kind providence of our God, I blame Thee not! Are there not designs of love in all that happens to us? And would it not be stiff-necked in me to forget that Thou knowest better than ourselves by what path—whether rough or smooth—it were best for us to journey? Wherefore, O my God, I bless Thy holy name!

"Then, too, how glorious is this mountain before me! I am learning already to love it as a friend. I can study nature now to my heart's content: and how entrancing such a study is! I know the flowers of the Pyrenees are among the treasures of the Old World; and in less than two years I shall have a beautiful collection of them. What a charming resource for my long winter evenings! There will be the classifying and ticketing them all, from the pyramidal saxifrage, with its great cluster of petals, which I delight in gathering on the scarp edges of the rocks, and the ramondia, that graceful primrose which refuses, like a haughty titled lady, to adorn our beautiful slopes, down to the little dwarf willow, the last shrub that grows near the glaciers.

"Here I am, then, in a new life, where I may commune more freely with Nature, with God, and with myself: with God, who, in His mercy, tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; with Nature, who has spread around me such lavish loveliness; with myself, at liberty from those thousand thralldoms in which the world enchains me, and open to that long and quiet meditation which finds in solitude its happiest and clearest exercise.

"My first visit has been to the vicar of Luchon. He has been fearfully warned against me. In our clerical world it is not deemed sufficient to injure a victim with a single blow, his fame must be blighted. The archbishop has doubtless written to him with his best ink on

the subject of this infected sheep, which he will be good enough to watch, lest the disease injure the flock. I found that the dean had already acted upon his instructions. There were with him the vicars of St. Mamet and Cascarille—my old fellow-students. They scarcely even greeted me, and I saw in their embarrassed countenances that, had they dared, they would have denied having ever seen me before. It is evident that my least acts will be noted. So I may consider myself as under the supervision of the archiepiscopal police.

"Since I may venture to set down in this paper my most unreserved thoughts, let me confess that I inwardly revolt against all this baseness. I can not deceive myself. I am henceforth the outcast of the clergy of T—. That conviction, which I now entertain for the first time, has filled me with indescribable bitterness. And yet the portion of the victim is nobler than that of his spy. I have brought this feeling to bear upon my foes, and it has calmed me down.

"Whenever the dean may feel embarrassed as to how to report upon me, I shall be happy to furnish him with a minute record of all my sayings and doings. It is as well to be on friendly terms with one's jailer, though, at the same time, to understand him thoroughly.

"If I have found among my clerical brethren hearts of ice, my dear mountaineers seem disposed to regard me as their best friend. They came from all quarters on the day of my institution. After the dean had said his incomprehensible say, as president on the occasion and representing the archbishop, I mounted the pulpit, and spoke rationally and heartily to my new flock. If my pulpit experience do not deceive me, my simple, candid words made a great impression upon them all, untutored as they were in the animosities of my enemies. After the ceremony, the dean, as though anxious to shun my pestilential presence, declined, as politely as possible, the modest meal which Martha had prepared, and went his way. I have neither been obsequious nor blustering with him. There are some men who can only be conquered by dignity; but even they are forced to succumb when they are compelled to respect those over whom they would gladly tyrannize. I hope this will be my good fortune with my friend the dean.

"The patriarchs of the parish, with the mayor at their head, half citizen half rustic, but apparently a worthy man, came to me of their own accord, as I left the church, to thank me for the good they had derived from my sermon. Mar-

tha told me that this had been an entirely impromptu demonstration: a few old men had said, 'Let us go and pay our respects to our new vicar, and tell him how pleased we are with what he has said.' The rest followed, and the mayor joined them. I have a perfect horror of official compliments; but this one, from my mountaineers, came from the heart, I am certain; so I am not afraid of losing their regard. I possess one infallible secret for maintaining it: I mean to be a kind pastor to them, and I know they will love me.

"Verdelon has written to me. His letter is strange and constrained. He speaks of Louise, of the pleasures of La Clavière, of the happiness he had in traversing again the places where he had first met her. And, in the midst of a long rigmarole of circumlocutions, such as advocates have at their fingers' ends, for ready use in the causes intrusted to them, I detect what almost amounts to a confession of his wish to marry her. All that is clear, except the positive avowal, which I do not see.

"How that letter has distressed me!

"Now begin the real troubles of my life. Alas! I had indulged in a delicious dream—dream of those who still have childhood's heart. I had accepted my lonely life in the hope that it would have been gladdened by a sister's gentle presence. What if this happiness, treasured up in anticipation these ten long years, is going to escape me!

"If Verdelon loved her as she deserves to be loved I could bear it. But he doesn't. In that letter I see no more signs of real attachment than in his confidential intercourse with me when he left the seminary. I find only the reserve of a man who is afraid of committing himself. But when he met Louise at La Clavière that reticence should have been laid aside. He has won her affection, I am sure; and in default of the interchange of mutual vows, there is that silent language of glances in which true lovers are never deceived.

"Yes, Louise loves Verdelon. Now I understand certain words and regrets, and an undefined sadness which she showed during my last day at La Clavière. She seemed very cool about my offer of a home with me.

"Oh, how I suffer! Farewell forever to my early hopes! Entranced with my boyhood's dreams, I pictured to myself a loving life with her who was dearer to me than all the world besides. I had only forgotten one thing—would my sister feel as I did? Poor Louise, you are breaking your brother's heart, all unable as he is to face life without you.

"But am I not dreadfully selfish? If Louise does love Verdelon, what right have I to wish to interpose a barrier between them?

"Though her heart has not spoken yet, will she be able to resist his offer when it comes, backed by his distinguished fame, his brilliant position in the world, that future of social prosperity so captivating to those of her age and sex? Dare I take upon myself to thwart, for a

wretched personal consideration, desires so lawful?

"But will he ask for her? He knows my fears as to the scheme of the Jesuits to get possession of our property, and he shares them himself. Perhaps this is the secret of his caution. And if so, he is unworthy of Louise; and when she finds it out, then.....

"I see I am utterly selfish. What might possibly break her heart fills me with hope. I blush to own it. Oh, my beloved Louise, be happy! and even though it cost me my life I would not grudge the sacrifice.

"For what can I offer her as a compensation for the loss of such a future? This desolate home, with its granite wall; this poor apartment, where my meals are prepared and eaten; one of those low, gloomy rooms, built of fir planks gaping with age, where her youth would waste away; a cell like a prison, where she would curse me in secret for having sacrificed her happiness to my selfish affection.

"No, I will not be my sister's jailer. I complain of those who tyrannize over me: can I dream of treading in their steps?"

CHAPTER II.

MORE OF THE DIARY.

"My pastoral life has its attractions. Ignorance, superstition, and monotony have shown themselves among my humble flock. It is my heritage from my predecessors here for ten generations. But I feel I can get rid of all this by degrees. I am training my people to think, and I find them sensible of the pains I am taking to speak to them in the simplest words. I only exhibit to them one view of truth—but I exhibit it under various aspects. I teach them as I would teach children, and I see already that the plan works well. Since the address of the dean, which was full of texts, they haven't heard a syllable of Latin from the pulpit. The good people have noticed this, and the warmest praise they think it possible to give me when they speak of me is, 'Our curé never speaks to us in Latin.' My addresses are very short. The harangues of Demosthenes to the most intelligent nation in the world only lasted half an hour. How, then, could my unenlightened Pyrenean friends put up with long sermons?

"Last Thursday the vicar of Luchon gave an official dinner on the occasion of the feast of the patron saint of the parish. I was there. The clergy round mustered strong, and I noticed that I was an object of lively curiosity. These gatherings are generally very pleasant. Seminarists are in the habit of treasuring up a little store of witticisms, which are dealt out in after-times at such meetings. There is nothing very spicy about them, it is true; but still, commonplace as they are, they produce hearty laughter. During the dinner, which lasted for three hours, I

joined in the cheerfulness of my brethren. There was plenty of eating, plenty of drinking, plenty of talking. I sat at the bottom of the table, as the youngest and most newly-appointed, near the vicar of the valley of Lys—a little, forgotten parish, like my own, in one of the remotest mountain haunts. On chatting with him I found him more truthful and natural, and of a higher tone than the generality of those present. Like me, he is an unfortunate outcast. He ventured to preach at St. Bertrand de Comminges, where he was a curate, against excessive devotion to the Virgin, and too frequent confessions from women, who detain their priests for many hours without being a bit the better for it afterward, either as regards charity to their neighbors or diligent discharge of home duties. A faction rose up against him. The vicar, who is a strong fanatic, reported him to the archbishop, representing him as a sort of free-thinker, attacking the Virgin, and decrying devotional habits. The poor fellow was summoned to T—, received a severe reprimand, and was finally posted off to a mountain parish to mend his manners.

"After dinner we met for a moment in the garden. He informed me that he was, like myself, an object of tender surveillance. Men in our position strike up a friendship wherever they come across one another. We promised to see each other occasionally, notwithstanding the difficulty of crossing the immense mountain barrier which separates the valley of Arboust from that of Lys. When I am out on my botanizing tours the expedition will not seem very tremendous. And even if it were, utter solitude would kill me. I feel I want a friend."

An interval of several months occurs at this point in the diary. There are some further fragments dated April, 1860, in which he continues his narrative.

"I have just received the following letter :—

"Palais of T—,

"REV. SIR,—The parish of St. Avenin is one of those in my diocese which has been longest without spiritual aid. Your predecessor was a feeble old man who never observed the periodical retreats. He greatly neglected the instruction of the people. The Capuchin friars of T— are disposed to preach 'retreat' sermons in every parish where their services may be required. I have made up my mind to send to St. Avenin Father Basil, one of their body. He is a man of God, of advanced spirituality, and admirably adapted for a country mission. He will arrive on the eve of the 1st of May to inaugurate the month of Mary among you. Be so good as to announce to your flock that he will preach to them every evening in your church during the month; and urge upon the faithful to take full advantage of this special privilege.

"I trust, moreover, that his example of priestly excellence will not be lost upon a young pastor like yourself; and I have every confidence

that the pious missionary will receive from you that attention and reverence due to his age and character.

"Do not forget that he enters your church in the name of your archbishop.

*"PIERRE FRANÇOIS,
"Archbishop of T—,"*

"As this letter, not overfull of benevolence on the part of a successor of the Apostles, requires no answer, I shall await peaceably the arrival of Father Basil. I am very much afraid that this man of such 'advanced spirituality' will sow the tares of childish observances among my flock. However, I hope and trust he will quote plenty of Latin, and lose himself and his hearers in a cloud of unintelligible subtleties; and that as soon as he is fairly off I shall find the people (who I suspect are not more enraptured with monks than other congregations I could name) quite ready to listen with pleasure to the addresses of the young priest, their friend. So we'll dismiss the reverend gentleman for the present, and hope for the best."

CHAPTER III.

TWO CULPRITS.

THE day after Julio received the archbishop's letter the presbytery of St. Avenin witnessed a strange scene.

About an hour before sunset a young girl, who appeared to be about twenty-two years old, might have been seen on the direct road which leads from Luchon to St. Avenin, and thence ascending the steep hill which is part of Mount Esquiéry winds into the valley of Oo. She was dressed in the costume of the country, only of a richer character: the material being fine and elegantly made up. She belonged to one of the neighboring valleys. None of the mountaineers who passed recognized her; it might even have been thought that she was trying to conceal her face. She walked very slowly, as though she were carrying a burden; and though she had only a red cotton umbrella in her hand, and a small light parcel of linen.

She was observed to pause a long time at the foot of the steep hill on which the village stood, with its little rustic chapel built against the rock; open in front and showing a long stone bench where those of the faithful kneel, who may chance to come and offer their devotions at that celebrated place of pilgrim resort. It was seldom that there were no lighted tapers to be seen on that bench; often during severe weather passers-by sheltered themselves from the squall under the projecting roof which formed a sort of porch. Often, too, the mendicant took refuge under the cover of the entrance, where he felt himself at home, and in tattered garb with outstretched hands asked alms of travelers with the customary prayer—

For the love of God, if you please!

The young girl knelt long on the cold stone,

as though buried in profound distress. Two women of the village, who chanced to see her there in that motionless attitude, heard the sighs and stifled sobs which escaped from her bosom, and fancied that she was accomplishing some vow for a dying mother.

She rose, trembling with weakness, and took the road clearly marked by carriage wheels, and where no stranger could possibly lose his way. The sun had set when she reached the village. Without addressing a single soul, without even looking about her, she made straight for the church, which she entered as though it had been her journey's end. Though it was very late, there was nothing extraordinary in this, as the Church of St. Aventin is much frequented by pilgrims.

Soon the various families had returned from their mountain labors, which consisted entirely of wood-carrying, and were gathered round the evening meal; the stranger being entirely forgotten.

Meanwhile the night had come on; and a dark night it was. The snow was still lying thick on the most exposed parts of the valley, and had only disappeared in those regions where the first warmth of the April sun had had full power. A dry, whistling wind was sweeping down from the height of the Lac d'Oo, and threatened a sharp frost for that night and the next day. The village was hushed into repose, the cattle had all been watered, the very dogs had ceased their incessant barking; from the distance came the echo of the thundering monotone of the torrent of Arboust, dashing from rock to rock at the foot of the valley, more than two hundred metres below St. Aventin.

Martha had finished at the presbytery, and gone home. Julio was alone. He thought he might as well go to the church to shut the door, and replenish the lamp which burned before the altar.

Kneeling at the entrance of the sanctuary, which was lighted up by the flickering glare of the small lamp in his hand, he fancied he heard a suppressed sound of sighs and prayers. He was not much startled at first. Pious women were wont from time to time to finish their day by coming there after hard toil or harder sorrow to pour out their soul before God, and seek to forget, in the solitude of His house, the hardships of poverty or affliction.

When Julio had replenished the sanctuary lamp he saw, by its brighter light, the young girl kneeling in the nave, and with her hands clasping the iron railing of the fretted work, a master-piece of the Middle Ages, the admiration of all travelers, which separated the choir from the nave, in the quaint old church.

The young pastor opening the rail and looking at the penitent, saw that she was oppressed with some sorrow of heart which she had been revealing to God. The poor thing was very pale, and the undried tears on her cheek gave back, like the polish of marble, the feeble glimmerings of the lamp.

He arrested his steps, being afraid to intrude on such deep dejection. However, as it was very late, he ventured to say with the utmost gentleness,

"Would you mind leaving, I want to close the door?"

"But I can't, M. le Curé, I am expecting some one."

The words were uttered with a trembling voice, indicative of great distress; and she turned instinctively toward the door, as though the person so eagerly expected were just entering.

"You expect some one, daughter?"

"Yes, M. le Curé."

And her heart overflowing, the young girl was convulsed with sobs, as though her very soul had been torn by a humiliating avowal.

"Daughter, do not distress yourself so much. I am a priest. And young as I am, I know what sorrow is as well as older men. Confide in me. God is here; and I swear by this altar that I will never betray you."

"Oh, impossible, M. le Curé—impossible! For my part I would thankfully tell you every thing! I am overwhelmed with remorse!"

She stopped a moment, and then went on—

"But nothing in the world could induce me to tell you whom I am expecting. I would rather die at your feet than do it. O merciful God, how wretched I am!"

And again she darted a terrified glance at the door, stating at the same time her earnest desire that the expected one would come, and her dread lest he should be recognized by Julio.

"I implore you, M. le Curé," she continued, "in the name of God and of the Holy Virgin, whom a polluted wretch like me is unworthy to invoke, respect my self-imposed silence, and do not try to find out our secret. He is not in a common position; he can not acknowledge our love. M. le Curé, pity us; perhaps I've said too much already; leave the church open a little longer, and as soon as we are gone—"

"Gone, my child! Where are you going such a night as this, and in this fearful gale? Is it because you do not wish to be recognized that you won't stop in the village?"

"Just that, M. le Curé. We dare not be recognized. All the better for the night to be dark, no one will be able to see us. We shall follow the road to the valley of Arreau as best we can. At all events we shall be together, and if we perish—"

"What are you talking of, poor child! Listen to me. I feel I have two duties to discharge, the more pressing one being to save you both; the other, to guard the sanctity of this church, which forbids its being used as a common rendezvous. I promise to leave the door open a little longer; but be candid with me, and tell me where you come from?"

"From the valley of Lys. I took the road from Luchon."

"And he?"

"He ought to come by the cross-road, pass the mountains of Upper Bagnères, come down

opposite St. Aventin, over the torrent by the bridge, and join me here."

"Why, he will lose his way."

"Oh no, he knows the mountain thoroughly."

"Possibly; but the night is so fearful. Then, too, if the snows are melted on the declivity of the valley of Lys, that's not the case here where it's a northern aspect. The road is no longer visible; nothing but masses of snow forming themselves into terrible glaciers. The torrent also is frightfully swollen. You mention the bridge. Do you know it's only a trunk of a tree which the foam is forever bathing, and in this keen frost it will be as slippery as glass?"

"Good Heavens! we never thought of that! O my God, save him!"

"And the night is so awfully dark! It would be dangerous to cross the torrent on a fine day when the water is low."

"What shall I do? oh, what shall I do? He was to have been here first, a few moments after sunset, and have waited for me."

"And now it has been full night this half-hour; he is in peril on the mountain. My child, we have no time to lose. You are a girl, and I am a man. Listen to me: this is what I will do. I will shut the door of the church, and you must come to the presbytery. Meanwhile I will take a large lantern and go in search of him. If he sees the light in the distance he will come toward me. I will take a long stout rope which I will throw to him across the torrent. Farewell, and may God assist us!"

Julio did not wait for her answer. He hurried to the door of the church, drew the massive bolts, and holding his small lamp, showed her the way into the low sitting-room of the presbytery, where a bright fire was blazing. Then he put on a pair of huge gaiters, wrapped himself in an over-coat of thick gray native stuff, put on a large old hat, and finally supplied himself with ropes, his mountain stick, and his lantern.

"Thank you," she exclaimed, with grateful tenderness. "May God reward you! You will save his life."

He quitted the house, and followed a steep road, hewn in a zigzag direction along the face of the rocks of St. Aventin, toward the torrent of the Arboust.

"If only I am in time," he said, "and the unfortunate man sees this light."

And he kept waving the lantern about, raising it to the level of his shoulders, that he might signal the traveler.

When Julio had got to about one hundred and thirty yards from the little bridge he found himself on a kind of platform formed by the perpendicular rocks through which the torrent dashed. Pausing for a moment, he fancied he heard the wandering echo of a human voice dying away in prolonged groans in the distance.

"There he is! there he is, the mad fellow! Oh, to what follies love leads! What a wild notion to expose himself at this time of the year in the midst of the snow!"

Julio tried to listen again, but a tremendous blast rushing down from the heights of the Esquière raced so furiously through the gorge that, had he not fortunately been sheltered by a great jutting rock, he would have been hurled to the bottom of the abyss. Leaning his back against the cliff, and grasping, as a precaution, some bushes of whortleberry which grew out of the crannies, he remained for a few minutes braving the hurricane that shook the ground with its terrible assault.

But the question was, what to do next? He couldn't help fancying that among the echoes of the storm he detected the groans of a human voice which he thought he had heard before. To advance farther and descend to the brink of the torrent was to expose himself to certain death at such a fearful moment.

"Yet, if I don't, that unhappy wretch may be perishing in the last agonies of despair."

So he listened no longer to the powerful instinct of self-preservation, which often daunts even the most fearless, but recommending his soul to the care of God, exclaimed:

"I have a brother to rescue, I must go on!"

And leaning stoutly on his iron-tipped staff, and drawing his cloak tightly round him, that it might catch the wind as little as possible, he strode with a firm step to the creek surrounded by the gnarled old trunks of trees and the narrow gorge through which the torrent dashed. There he found the rude bridge, formed of a single plank of fir, squared, which the hardy mountaineers used to cross merrily each day as they went to their work, regardless of its peril, making feints at pushing one another over into the gulf below.

He approached the spot. There is always something awful in a tempest and impressive in night; and Julio shuddered in the presence of the infuriated elements, which seemed as though they would have whirled him away like a grain of dust. What he had already dreaded, by anticipation, presented itself now and filled him with dismay. The trunk of the tree which served as a bridge was glazed with ice, and was a complete spar of rock-crystal, flinging back the reflection of the lantern in myriad star-gleams. However, there are pauses even in the most furious storm. The raging torrent seemed to have hushed its moanings, and in the lull that ensued Julio heard again most distinctly the sound of a voice, and felt confident that it was the traveler.

"Good Heaven! what shall I do? To take two steps on that glazed trunk, rocked by these furious waters, is certain death. Yet there is a momentary calm. If I could but manage to reach the other side by the help of this rope—"

Here a bright thought occurred to him. He explored for a few minutes the edge of the path which led to the bridge, and selecting a sharp piece of granite of sufficient weight, tied one of the ends of the rope tightly round it.

As soon as he had secured the knot he placed the lantern in the hollow of the tree on which

the bridge rested, and by thus concentrating the rays lit up the other side of the abyss.

Then summoning all his strength by one of those impulses which often come at such a crisis he hurled the block of stone, with the rope attached to it, across the gulf; it lighted below the bridge, in the heart of the huge rocky boulders, and anchored firmly.

"Poor fellow! you shall be rescued, wherever you are," he said to himself.

Then straining the cord with all his might he secured it to the trunk of the tree, at about one and a quarter yards from the ground. Next he cut off two lengths of what remained: one he fastened round his body, proposing to support himself by a slip-knot to his new bridge, just as ferries are prevented from being carried down the stream by a pulley running along a cable which unites the two banks; the other he stowed away very carefully in his girdle, together with his lantern, so invaluable at such a critical moment.

As a still further precaution, instead of attempting to walk on the iced plank he got astride of it, gripping it hard with his legs and slipping along cautiously, his hands on the rope. A savage gust of wind attacked him when he was in the middle of his passage, but, happily, with no effect; the cord held firm, and the abyss was crossed.

To slip off the cord which was round his body and to hide it away against his return was but the work of an instant. He had manifested incredible self-possession throughout the whole affair, nor had he forgotten to carry his staff over on his back. This was the more needful since below the bridge the snow-drift commenced, the weird mountain pines stretching up from the midst, while the rocks had been recently undermined by an avalanche.

Julio had often reached the St. Aventin side of the torrent in his walks, but had never advanced further; so the place where he now was was entirely unknown to him. His only hope was that the wanderer would catch a sight of the lantern, or that he would be able to hear his groans if he had fallen into some abyss. Happily he had already learned from the mountaineers the use of the alpenstock in the snow.

"I must be quick," he said; "not a moment to lose. The wind has calmed down, but the roar of the water prevents me from hearing any sound. I had better climb higher."

A depression in the ground led him to imagine that that was the road to Upper Bagnères under the snow. Steep as the ascent was, he accomplished it up to a certain height, where a dense mass of young firs offered shelter. The spot was a kind of terrace, such as is often to be found in the mountains. He calculated that he was as near as possible at the same height as the place the other side of the gulf, where he had heard the groans a few minutes before. He resolved to halt there that he might be ready to catch the least sounds. But there was no echo from the mountains as he strained his ear.

"Excelsior! excelsior!"

And, helped at every step by his stout staff, he climbed the ascent. There was no trace, up to that moment, of recent footsteps in the snow, as his lantern clearly showed him. Suddenly, however, he fancied he discovered marks of a man's boot repeated several times along the way which he had concluded was the road to Upper Bagnères. He followed them for about ten paces, examined them closely with his light, and was satisfied that they were what he took them to be; not, indeed, those of a mountaineer—they were not clumsy enough for that—but of a stranger who had come down from the heights, and just passed that way.

But how to pursue the track; for it disappeared at this point, and beyond was a depth so dark and profound that it was impossible to form an opinion as to whether the traveler had been able to push along any further by some projecting path, or whether he had fallen down a cliff. The last supposition he judged to be the more probable.

"He stopped here—I see his footprints. There is even a giving way of the snow. No doubt the poor wretched man has fallen down there."

Then he shouted at the top of his voice; but for answer came the mocking of the howling wind, and a still more mocking silence.

"Traveler! are you there? I am come to rescue you."

There was one course left—to explore the bottom of the ravine where the man must have fallen. But the question was how to get there, and what direction to take so as to avoid the same fate, and the risk of leaving two bodies to bleach in the valley. His perplexity was extreme. To risk his life, with the pretty certain prospect of finding only mangled remains, the limbs stiffened with cold, or to return to St. Aventin, and tell the poor girl that he had discovered traces of the lost one, but that there was little doubt that he had rolled over the cliff with the masses of snow, was distasteful alike to the courage and generosity of his disposition.

"I will go the whole length now," he said; and availing himself of his previous knowledge of the conformation of those mountain paths, he determined to regain the bridge as speedily as possible, to follow the torrent up a little way, then to turn off to the right, toward the place where he was standing, and where there was a sharp, projecting mass, the result of some early convulsions of the mountain chain.

Julio's plan was the right one. Almost immediately after he had commenced making his way along the cliff up the stream, he came to a yawning recess, formed by precipitous walls of rock on one side, and by cliffs of mountain schist on the other. It was down these crumbling sides that the traveler had tumbled to the bottom.

There Julio found him lying motionless; his face pale and distorted, but no signs of severe bruises about him.

His first anxiety was to know whether he was alive. The heart was beating still, and from the

open mouth a slight breath issued; the limbs were already stiffening with cold; a few moments more would have been fatal.

Julio had brought with him a pocket-pistol, incased in wicker-work, and filled with brandy. Putting it to the poor man's lips he made him swallow a little of the precious fluid. Then he poured some in his hand, and got him to inhale it, rubbing his hands and temples at the same time. Soon a movement like that of a man awaking from a heavy sleep showed that life was returning.

By degrees the young man recovered. Julio helped him to rise.

"Do you feel any wounds about you?" he asked.

"No," said the stranger, getting up as he spoke; "the snow has doubtless broken the violence of my fall. I must have dropped from a great height. I only remember that my foot slipped, and I rolled down a terrible cliff. I lost my senses from the cold more than from the pain. But now I seem quite coming round."

"Then drink some more brandy," said Julio; "but let us be quick; there's a capital fire waiting for us at St. Aventin."

"Oh, thanks!—a thousand thanks! Whoever you are, you have saved my life. But how came you to be in this wild gorge with a lantern?"

"Friend, I was looking for you."

"Oh! then you know all. She has told you."

"Yes, she has; and a kind Providence ordered that I should interpose, and save you both from ruin and disgrace."

"You know my name, then?"

"I didn't ask it; nor hers, either. But let us make haste, there's a momentary lull, and I am afraid of the return of those frightful blasts which rush with irresistible fury through our valleys. We have the torrent to cross yet; and, rash fellow, how could you risk your life at so late an hour among these mountains? But you will tell me all that by-and-by: let us set off at once."

The stranger managed to get along very tolerably to the bottom of the valley; but by the time he had reached the bridge the shock of his fall had so affected his head that the rapid torrent, and the tumult of the floods boiling against the rocks, turned him giddy. He declared he could never venture across that iced plank.

"My head is going; and as for dying, I would rather perish here quietly. I could commit my spirit to Him whom I have so grievously offended; but let me, at least, know the name of the heroic man who has risked his life to save mine."

There was nothing in Julio's appearance to show that he was a priest. His huge gray hat, fastened under his chin; his thick woolen overcoat, buttoned from the neck to the waist, with his long leather gaiters, indicated any one rather than the simple village pastor. Yet the stranger gazed at him carefully, the light of the lantern falling on his pale and gentle countenance.

"Surely, Sir, I have seen you before," he said; "your features, your voice are familiar. If I am not mistaken we have met already."

Julio looked at the other in his turn. He seemed to be in the prime of life, and about thirty years old. His dress showed a certain position. His linen was fine: a black frock-coat, almost new, a large dark blue overcoat, black trowsers, and respectable boots. Such was his attire. His face was shaved.

"I, too," said Julio, suddenly, "have seen you somewhere. The sound of your voice, your profile, are quite familiar to me. Why, shake hands; you are my brother, the Abbé Loubère, vicar of the valley of Lys. I met you at the presbytery at Luchon: I am Julio, vicar of St. Aventin."

"O my God!" cried the other. "Thou art full of compassion. Thou hast sent me a priest. Father, hasten to absolve me. You know my horrible crime: I have only that upon my conscience; but it is fearful enough. I confess it to God and you. Will you have that poor girl sent to Luchon? She is the daughter of a most respectable man, the mayor of —. Happily nothing of the matter is known. No one suspects our flight, as she went away on the pretext of visiting an aunt at T—. If she make that journey her reputation is saved. And since God's justice must have its way, leave me.....I feel that.....Farewell. God be merciful, and forgive a wretched priest!"

And he sank into a deep swoon, which had every appearance of death.

Julio at that fearful moment raised his heart to God in prayer for strength and courage; and raising up the poor man—who sank back, however, immediately—he laid him down gently on a heap of small crumbling stones. Then he re-applied the remedies which he had before used—rubbing him over the heart and temples with the palm of his hand. By degrees the eyes opened, the warmth returned, while a few drops of brandy forced down the sufferer's throat recovered him from his swoon.

Julio was most anxious to appeal to his sense of duty.

"My friend, my beloved brother," he said, "you are saved. Strength is returning. Keep up your spirits and listen to me. I have devised a plan for crossing the torrent. Come along; drink some of this flask. Ah, that's right. You're better now, aren't you?"

"Yes, I breathe a little; but do leave me to die, as I have justly deserved. O my God! let me perish here by this miserable doom!"

"No, my friend, no; you shall not die. I, Julio, assure you of that. Don't leave me to the dreadful regret of not having been able to save you. Think of her life, as well as yours. Come, my friend, your sin you may well hate; but don't, by giving way here, consign her to life-long remorse."

The last argument told.

"You are right. I should be a coward to her, and ungrateful to you, if I didn't pluck up

courage. I place myself in your hands. May God help me!"

Julio lost no time. Such reactions of the mind on the body are never long. The dreadful hurricane, too, might return. The air was brisk, though quiet; but the moanings of the torrent, tumbling in great cascades from ledge to ledge, were fearful, and enough to bring on another of those attacks of the brain which would have ended in entire mental and physical prostration.

Julio took a large silk handkerchief out of his pocket, and felt for some pieces of paper, which he tore up, wetted, made into strong plugs, and put them into the ears of his poor friend. Then he bandaged his eyes, and covered his head all over.

"Now let me guide you," he said to Loubère; "and don't be afraid. There will be no danger for either of us if you follow my directions. I am going to bind us together with a rope. As soon as we are both astride of the plank you will put one arm round me, and with the other you will grasp that line, which I shall keep hold of also. I will glide slowly along the iced beam; you will have nothing to do but to lean forward a little on me, so that the weight of my body may, in a measure, support yours. If, toward the middle of the bridge, a violent gust comes on, there is no danger. The rope is strongly secured to the trunk of a tree on the other side of the torrent. I am going to fasten it in a similar way on this—you understand."

Every arrangement having been made, he took him by the hand, seated him skillfully at the beginning of the bridge, fastened on to himself one piece of rope, intended to act as a pulley, and passed another round the waist of his friend.

"Now hold fast, and trust in God."

The expedition succeeded beyond their hopes. The two priests were soon on the left bank of the torrent. They unloosed the ropes that had bound them, and, thanks to the flask which invigorated them both, they were able to ascend with a firm step the hill leading to St. Aventin.

On the way the poor young priest finished his story, with perfect unreserve. The young Pyrenean and himself were on the point of flight. Julio had been the means of arresting them.

The next day, at a very early hour, Julio awoke the priest, who had shared his bed, and set him on the road for Luchon, his way back to the valley of Lys. The girl, too, set forth very shortly afterward for T—. Before starting she asked Julio to let her into the church. There, at the foot of that same iron railing where she had bowed herself in such anguish the night before, and recovering as from a hideous dream, she knelt to implore forgiveness for the past, and received full absolution in the name of God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAPUCHIN FATHER.

JULIO announced to his people, on the Sunday before the month of May, that there would be a course of teaching in his church for four weeks by Father Basil, a Capuchin friar, sent by the archbishop on a mission to the parish. He communicated the fact somewhat briefly, in order that he might quietly give them to understand that he did not himself attach much importance to the mission. He took good care, however, to omit none of the archbishop's orders. There is nothing so convenient as routine.

Having done that, he waited in patience for the reverend father's arrival.

The word "mission" in many dioceses in France, and particularly in the south, where religious duties are more faithfully observed, is always powerful with congregations. "We must have our mission," is a sacred phrase, which, when repeated from hamlet to hamlet, draws together an entire parish. The indifferent—the procrastinating even—come, urged by respect for popular feeling, and having no fancy to be pointed at. On the other hand, in countries where faith is at a low ebb, those who are pious at heart often stay away from church from the fear of being laughed at as fanatics: a new proof of the fact that opinion rules the world, compelling men at one time to appear bigots, at another atheists.

The famous Father Basil arrived at last by the T— diligence at Luchon, carefully packed in the coupé, and supplied with a complete cargo of rosaries, medals, images of every size and color, and little books for his propaganda work. He alighted at the Luchon presbytery, and expressed his astonishment at once that the young vicar of St. Aventin had not been to the diligence to meet him.

"What do you expect, reverend father? It's just the result of these modern ideas, and a very characteristic one, too."

"You are right, Mr. Dean; in our day there was greater respect for old men."

"What will happen to us, reverend father?"

"The world is in a most desperate condition."

"It is; but happily religious orders are spreading abroad their blessed influence. They will be the saving of France."

"Unhappy France!"

During this dialogue, the presbytery house-keeper—a great gaunt-looking, red-eyed female, who did the church and clerical washing, and was partial to ordering about an inferior cook—made all haste to get breakfast ready for the Capuchin. She saluted the reverend father very deferentially, and like a well-taught damsel, said,

"Your reverence is served."

The journey from T— by the long valley of the Peak, with fresh mountain breezes all the way, from the heights of Vénasques and the

glaciers of Escoublons, is enough to give any one an appetite. So our friend Basil did ample justice to the sausage provided—as well as to an izard stew, remnants from the night before, and dainties to which the dean was tenderly attached. He even made a very tidy attack on a grilled shoulder of mutton.

"Will your reverence take some coffee?" asked the tall housekeeper, mysteriously.

"Why not?" said his reverence, cheerful, not to say hilarious, under the influence of a little bottle of St. Bertrand. "That's not a bad line of Voltaire's, infidel scamp though he was,

"C'est toi, divin café, dont la douce liqueur—"

Help me, Mr. Dean; I can't remember the rest. Ah! stop, I have it,

"—— et rejouit notre cœur."

"What wonderful men these reverend fathers are!" said the dean, to himself. "I couldn't quote a line of Voltaire for the life of me. They know every thing."

During that profound reflection the Capuchin had drained to the very last dreg a brimming cup of coffee supplied by the generous attention of the venerable Hebe of the presbytery. The beverage had been pretty strongly flavored with some Armagnac, served on a waiter with the sugar.

"Reverend father," said the dean, with unspeakable urbanity, "you are very tired. Such a dreadful road that Luchon road is! Don't you think you would be the better for another cup?"

"Possibly I should, Mr. Dean. So here goes for a second."

And as soon as the housekeeper had supplied it, she went up to her master, on a particular sign from him, and receiving a little key—a special key—the key of the cellarette, in the corner of the dining-room—departed in quest of a bottle of particular brandy, which was never produced but on grand occasions.

"Taste that, reverend father," said the curé.

And the father helped himself to a large allowance of old Armagnac.

"Ah, Mr. Dean, that's the stuff!"

"You'll come again, good father?"

"Most undoubtedly."

"That's right. And now what's the T—— news?"

"Oh, fairish. Our house takes. We have had some new members. Money comes in by degrees. We require to build, for we are rather hard up for room."

"Exactly; but that's easy in T——. It's a town full of resources."

"Famous at charity, Mr. Dean. There are so many good families there. All of the old stock, you see."

"Just so, before the new lights had begun to shine," said the dean, laughing himself at the sarcasm contained in his answer.

"And yet every thing gets marred, somehow. Frankly, there is too much competition. The Jesuits injure us considerably. They are at it

now—building something or other of unmentionable grandeur—a citadel, a Louvre, a Vatican. Between ourselves, Mr. Dean—not that I would say such a thing in irreverent ears—they don't show much of the spirit of poverty urged by the founders of religious orders. Our holy Founder insisted on this in our case. His beloved daughter, St. Clair, refused positively certain large sums which Gregory IX. wished to pay her. Not the fashion of the Jesuits that! They refuse nothing, I assure you. Why, the money they sack is enormous. Any inheritance not in movable property they get hold of by means of executors—little saints just cut out for the work, well known at T——; and thus they secure splendid châteaux and domains. Believe me, all is fish that comes to their net. Of course this is under the rose, and not in any backbiting spirit. We respect the order, there is much good in it; but we may venture to allow that it is not altogether a mistake to accuse them of a tendency to aggression."

"I perfectly agree with you, reverend father; but what would you have? There is a reverse side to every medal. Even the sun is not spotless."

"Of course, Mr. Dean; but what we say of them is not directed against individual members. I assure you all I have urged is notorious. They are cunning fellows, but their doings only eke out by degrees. Among the princely fortunes which they will one day have are those of the President Massol and Madame de le Clavière, who is getting weaker and weaker, and who, according to Boileau, wishes to return to God what her worthy husband netted in the world. As far as we poor Capuchins are concerned, the only windfall we have had at T—— has been from the excellent Mademoiselle Flo-tard. That saintly lady died a few months ago, full of years and good works. May God have pity on her soul!"

And so saying, the father warmed up both himself and his speech with another glass of Armagnac. He could not hide the jealousy with which all the religious orders regard one another, and, by common consent, the Jesuits, who leave them very little more than the crumbs of the loaf.

"And how about Rome and Paris?"

"Fearful news of Italy. Every thing is in a turmoil. The hellish serpent which has sworn to overthrow the temporal power—with his Mazzinis, and Garibaldis, and endless Carbonari—is in motion. There are grave apprehensions for the future."

"You don't mean to say so?"

"Yes, I do."

"But there's Rome. Rome is true, and with the protection of France—"

"Get away with you, my dear dean! Why, it's that very protection which worries the Pope out of his life, and makes all good men despair. Have they kept their promises? The Romagna's lost; the rest will follow. A French army at Rome! Good Heavens! I don't deny that it

would prevent a break-out—an insurrection. But wouldn't some brave Austrian or Irish volunteers, well paid (and Rome is rich enough), be worth more than all the French army, with no more religion than their baptism? I am never mistaken in these political questions. Over and over again have I said to our fathers, 'France will play us a scurvy trick before she has done with us.' I happened to be traveling in Italy on business connected with our order, and spent a month at Rome. Would you like me to tell you what I thought?"

And the old gentleman refreshed himself with a third glass, and proceeded:

"Your hateful French are no good at Rome, except to flirt with the ladies; and that army of theirs is called an army of occupation—a pretty name for them that, my dear dean! They may go to-morrow. Take my word for it, they will leave a whole generation behind them, even in the palaces of the aristocratic Romans."

"Oh, you're too hard upon them, my good father. They are said to be full of respect for the Pope. They are only too glad to receive any token, rosary, or medal at his hands."

"So far they are fair enough; they are not bad at heart. Hence they are willing to kneel before 'Santità di nostro Signore;' but that all vanishes when the evening comes. Just see, now. We hear nothing of all that. I tell you, however, that the whole state of things there is utterly rotten. Cardinal Antonelli, who is no fool, would be only too glad to see the French army a thousand leagues off. Talk to me of Austrian soldiers! Those I saw at Bologna, some time ago, were as well behaved as young girls. But as for your French!".....

The dean brought him back to the point.

"You think, then, that the prospect is very gloomy there?"

"Very, very! My brethren tell me that I look only at the dark side. It's possible. But then things are quiet in France, and I have spent a long time in Italy. I know what's smouldering in that volcano. There will be a fearful crash. And, in any case, all that I have said has been foreseen. And then, and then, Mr. Dean— But you've made me talk a long time. I must think of starting for this village. And, speaking of that, what sort of a place is St. Aventin? What do you know of its vicar? There are funny records about him at the palace."

"What can you expect, father? He is full of the new ideas. He has the reformation of the Church on his hands."

"Dear me! dear me! how sad!"

"You may well say so, reverend father. He is good enough in his parish. Every thing is kept up the same as ever. The old men make allowances for his youth. But he is very ignorant. You will be an immense blessing there!"

"Pray that it may be so, Mr. Dean; and urge the faithful of your parish to pray much for the prosperity of my mission. Let us, above all, commend this benighted people to the Im-

maculate Virgin—entreating her to protect them against the dangerous doctrines of their brainless young pastor. For you know as well as I do that his sermons have created some considerable anxiety at the palace. It is feared that he may infect his parish with his errors and novelties. People are so easily impressed, you see. Then, too, the preservation of the faith is such a weighty consideration. It would be better far to sacrifice him than to imperil his flock. Only his highness is so forbearing, so lenient with his priests."

"True, true; very forbearing; very lenient. I confess I would rather have had this tiresome youngster any where than in my district. He will only be an anxiety to me, I fear. I have been here for twenty years, and if I were to tell you all the vexation I have had with young priests you would be amazed. Certainly office has its advantages. The dignity is independent. He enjoys considerable respect. But put alongside of all that—watching these fellows!"

"A disagreeable task, I must say."

"It is, indeed. But, reverend father, do you intend walking to St. Aventin?"

"Most certainly."

"But it's a long distance from Luchon—nearly five miles. True, the road is excellent; but notwithstanding that I think it would be better to have a carriage. At your age, and stout too. Then, too, in our valleys there are tremendous currents of air. You would get heated, and your blood would freeze. Just consider, your life is so precious to the Church."

"I can't refuse to listen to good advice, Mr. Dean."

"Capital: I'll order a carriage for you."

And the corpulent Capuchin—true type of that class of monks, with rubicund, puffed-out face, painted by great artists and immortalized in our port-folios—invigorated with a hearty meal, and made merry by liberal applications to the coffee and Armagnac, stowed himself away in one of the slow-dragging Luchon vehicles bound for the presbytery of St. Aventin.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOVES OF LOUISE AND VERDELON.

LOUISE and Verdelon were in love. They had never confessed it to one another. But their attachment, like all others, was constrained to arrive by the same checkered course of tender emotions, fears, and crosses, at that final revelation when the avowal is made and answered.

It was at La Clavière, under the shade of the grand old trees in one of those ordinary walks, in which the two lovers were enjoying the freshness of the mild, balmy breezes of early spring, rambling on side by side in pleasant, cheerful intercourse through those same winding alleys where they had first met.

Verdelon, so reserved, so thoroughly matter

of fact, prudent as an old man—this Verdelon, in the presence of beauty, with its mighty influences, succumbed, in spite of himself, to the strange spell and felt that he was human.

But happiness is not a thing to be minutely delineated: its history is very simple. So we must not dwell upon the delights of earliest love experienced by Louise.

Fortunately for their unrestricted intercourse Madame de la Clavière was more delighted with Verdelon than ever. The days that Julio's friend spent at her house seemed to lighten up for a moment that feeble life so evidently dying out.

Hence his visits were continued without the least check: the only regret on the part of his entertainers was that they were too few.

The young advocate was as attentive to the matron as if he had been her own son: quite outvying M. Tournichon in his readiness for cards—the last delight of old women.

At the same time Verdelon and Julio had kept up their correspondence with tolerable regularity, and the letters from the mountain were a fruitful subject of conversation with the three—one of whom was on the brink of the grave, while the others were gay with the joys of youth and its golden dreams.

The good aunt was not selfish. The young people must take walks, she said; little suspecting that the excursions had any other attraction beyond the gold-fish and the bright beds of flowers. Moreover, there were her prayers, meditations, and rosaries enjoined upon her in a regular list, corrected and enlarged by our old friend M. Briffard. She would not have failed in a single one of his directions for all the world. And often was she obliged to quit the cheerful table, with a reluctance little short of Louise's, when Time, the lovers' enemy, and fond of changing their hours into minutes, broke up her intercourse with Verdelon and bade him depart.

In spite, however, of the claims upon the young lady from household duties and filial respect, they had plenty of opportunities to give and repeat a thousand times their vows of perpetual love.

And as young human nature is fond of anticipating, every thing was arranged for a brilliant life at T—, as soon as their vows had been sealed at the altar. Louise drank in all the pleasures of hope; but Verdelon, though as enamored as herself, refrained from abandoning himself to the prospect with the same unreserve. His duties at T—, the daily fag at the bar, his letters, associations, connections—all helped to divert him, and to bring him back to that calm calculation which was the essence of his character, and which he never forgot, except in those momentary surprises of love, which a man of his age can not always manage to avoid.

Then, too, Verdelon, being a most talented advocate, felt his power. A brilliant career was opening before him. His spirit, fully capable as it was of earnest attachment, was as yet en-

chained more by the seductive longings of ambition. Louise saw nothing in Verdelon but the man to whom her whole heart was devoted. Verdelon, on the other hand, saw in her exquisite beauty, and the highest and tenderest qualities of disposition. But all the more for his not being conscious of the fact, he thought of her rank, of the illustrious position of her ancestors, and last, not least, of the brilliant fortune which the approaching death of her aunt would place at her disposal.

CHAPTER VI.

SCIENCE AND THE CAPUCHIN.

THE creaking carriage in which the heavy Capuchin was ensconced arrived in due time at Julio's door. The weather was glorious. A bright sun had melted the last snows of the valley, and concentrating its rays on the vast defile of St. Avenin, changed the whole landscape into some region of the tropic, though around it were the glaciers and plains of hitherto unvoyageable snow.

Julio had taken advantage of so charming a day to make one of his usual botanical and mineralogical excursions. With his iron-tipped staff, without which no one ever ventured on the mountain, and duly equipped in gaiters and an over-coat, his tin box on his shoulder, warranted to keep the air from the flowers he had gathered, so that they might be arranged in all their freshness in his collection, a little bag at his waist for his mineralogical hammer, and a pair of scissors in his pocket for the rare lichens which draped the naked rocks, he had been climbing the heights till he reached the parts where the snow was still lying. In these excursions he often met some of his people at their work. Accosting them with pleasant familiarity he gratified their self-esteem by asking them several questions about the country, the climate, the vegetation, the capabilities of the soil, the progress of agriculture, the rearing of cattle, and exploring of forests. To the young shepherds he addressed himself by asking them the name in their language for some flowers. He stopped the poor and the aged, and spoke to them words of comfort. To all he revealed the Father above, glorified in His works, and diffusing His blessings on the toil of human hands, and the godly longings and lovings of human souls.

Julio told Louise in a letter that he had two pulpits, one in his church where he preached on Sunday, the other under the vault of heaven, where he preached through the week in field, high-road, or lonely paths, or under the shelter of some humble cot; adding that the latter sermons were often the most useful.

The monk knocked at the presbytery door, but no one answered. A woman who was passing by told him that the curé was absent, offering respectfully to inform Mrs. Martha, the

housekeeper, to which he gratefully assented.

Martha, however, was not forthcoming. She too had availed herself of the fine day to go wood-hunting. The old monk, being of a peevish turn, began to get very cross; when Julio, returning from his excursion, and bending under the weight of his mineral wealth, appeared in sight.

"If you belong to the village," quoth Father Basil, who did not take him for an ecclesiastic, "can you direct me to a house where I can wait till M. le Curé returns? He seems to be out."

"Enter, reverend father; I am the curé," and producing a key, Julio opened the door.

"You don't look much like one," said the monk.

"Oh, wait a minute," he answered, "I'll soon remedy that. You know the saying, father, '*Habitus non facit monachum*.'"

"Why, he's a thorough young mad-cap," said the old man to himself; "my presence doesn't awe him in the least."

"Pray sit down, father; I'm at your service."

And Julio quietly deposited before the eyes of the astonished monk his great cylindrical box full of plants, and his bag of minerals, and then went to his room to put on his soutane and take off his heavy boots. He was back in a moment, his face bright with cheerful smiles.

"The vicar of St. Aventin has the honor to tender his respectful homage to the very reverend Father Basil; for I conclude that it was of you that his highness wrote to me."

"It is, Mr. Vicar."

"Welcome, father."

And he conducted him to the room which had been prepared for him, where the Capuchin deposited his cargo of treasures duly blessed, declining the refreshments which were offered to him, on the ground of having so recently fasted; he was unwilling, he said, to spoil his appetite for dinner.

"Father," said Julio, "I am the master of this house, you understand, and am delighted to have the pleasure of entertaining you. But let us be on a clear footing at first. I would define it in a single sentence—Each of us to be completely independent of the other. Does that suit you?"

"Perfectly," said the Capuchin, little accustomed, however, to find among the humble country vicars of the diocese of T— such complete self-possession, and such aristocratic and dignified manners.

"We shall breakfast at 10, and dine at 5. Those are my hours; they suit, too, the convenience of my housekeeper."

"Very well, Mr. Vicar."

"I have given out your services for every day in the month, at sunset, that the people may have time to get home to their evening meal. It is their only disengaged hour. If your discourses are not too long, every thing will be finished early, and you will be better understood. All the families will contribute very largely to

your congregation, and we shall not have to dread the risks of night meetings, which, with our numerous country youths, are often dangerous."

Father Basil was greatly struck by the distinguished air of Julio, as well as by his forcible and sensible language.

"Yes, that's a capital arrangement. Sometimes I am a little long; but—"

"In your case, father, I fancy brevity is essential to success; but of course you can act as you please. I offer you my opinion simply and honestly. In this, as in every thing else, liberty is our motto. And now I am going to take the lead in giving you an example of it."

And returning to his room he laid aside his soutane once more and put on a large dressing-gown well wadded, a necessary precaution in a cold climate, where changes of temperature are always sudden and severe. Depositing a little work-table in the middle of the room, and heaping his minerals upon it, he began examining his specimens with a microscope in order to classify them.

"We are very rich in minerals here, father. The Pyrenees, like the Apennines, contain almost every variety of volcanic and depository formation. So they supply me with an almost perfect history of the earth's crust. I am much better off here than if I were in the centre of the chain. I have only to follow the torrent of Arboust, to climb up to the Lake of Seculejo, and reach the Pic d'Espingo, all tolerably close, and safer of access because there are so few glaciers, and I am on the very summit of the range between France and Spain. Often at these heights, three hundred metres above the level of the sea, the prodigious force which has broken the earth's crust with a gorge some eighty leagues long has thrown up, as in the case of the Marboré, huge masses of calcareous rock which have formed the basins of a series of lakes. These beds have preserved their level as though the aqueous deposit had been collected at those vast elevations: most frequently the centre of the chain presents granite masses of terrible hugeness. What an overwhelming concussion must that have been which has thus disordered our globe and changed a vast plain, with its waters, into a giant wall of granite abutted right and left by huge piles of these sedimentary formations which it has rent up. This shows you, my father, that we have here all classes of rocks; beautiful granite, with which the baths at Luchon are built; syenite, porphyry, and every variety of marble. But let me show you the result of my day's excursion."

And putting each fragment successively under the microscope, he exhibited them to the monk.

"Here is a beautiful specimen of granite composite. The orthoze, quartz, and mica are in perfect proportions. Here is an exquisite bit of quartz, I got it from a large vein which runs through the whole length of the ridge of that mountain. Just notice, father, under the

instrument, the delicate hearts of those little dark crystals. It is peroxyd of crystallized manganese. I found, too, a piece of red porphyry of extremely fine texture, such as the Egyptians employed for their vast tombs, their sphinxes, and the statues of their gods. Examine it well. I don't, however, suspect that there is much of it here. Then, besides the rocks of aqueous and igneous formation, I find others, the result of droppings of water impregnated with carbonate of lime and various acids. Hence we have massive stalagmites, which come under the head of marbles, and which are especially remarkable for their transparency and beautiful colors. But I am talking on too fast, father; I am afraid I shall tire you out with my chatter."

"Not by any means," answered the Capuchin, in whose ears, however, the terms quartz, oxyds, carbonate, and stalagmite sounded not unlike certain words to be found in Babylonian inscriptions.

"It is wonderful," he said to himself, "that when young men dip their nose into science in this way they become what St. Augustine calls 'glorious animals,' and want to reform the Church! Oh blessed ignorance, how preferable thou art!"

The monk, however, had no fancy to confess modestly by his silence an utter lack of acquaintance with such matters. So he set to work, hunting in the innermost recesses of his brain for some remembrances of the commentaries of Don Calmet on the age of the world and the Deluge, and discoursed upon those themes to Julio with characteristic Capuchin assumption and stupidity.

"You hold, then, with the modern theory as to the successive ages of the world," he remarked.

"Yes, in obedience to the dictates of my senses."

"Systems, after all; nothing but systems."

"Systems, doubtless, father; but based upon facts. Hence the realities in scientific order."

"But don't you see that all this has been invented by skeptics, to attack the faith?"

"Surely not, father. Our holy religion is supremely independent of positions like these. What connection can it have with what I may call the gradual congealing of the globe, in its transitions from a state of incandescence to a temperature adapted to animals and plants?"

"But why not adhere to the record of Moses, limiting this transition, as you call it, to six days; and ascribing every thing to the direct putting forth of Divine power? Do you think God could not have created all you see in a moment of time?"

"Most undoubtedly He could; but that is not the question. What we have to do is to determine by an analysis of facts whether God has organized the world with its mineral crust, its vegetation, its animal life, in so many days or so many ages."

At this crisis the monk thought a bit of Latin would have a good effect.

"The text of the Bible is decisive, 'Factum est vespere et mane dies unus!' That which has night and morning is a day like our own. It would be absurd to talk of the evening and morning of a thousand years. You are indulging in perilous subtleties, my young friend. All these fine theories of yours help forward only the infidel's triumph."

"Oh, my good father, whether you or I believe the glorious revelations of science or not, these revelations still remain. The Pope might put it forth to-morrow, as an article of faith, that the epoch of creation was only twenty-four hours long; but—"

"If the Pope declared it you must believe it, or cease to be a Catholic."

"Then if the Pope declared that two and two make thirty, you must believe it, or cease to be a Catholic?"

"He wouldn't talk such rubbish."

"Then he had better not talk the other."

As soon as Julio had classified his specimens, he put them in a drawer where the treasures of each day had been arranged. Then taking some gray blotting-paper and opening his box of flowers, he pressed between the sheets the first spring blossoms he had found, after having carefully ascertained all their history, and finished up by ticketing each with a card bearing its scientific name.

So passed the afternoon at the presbytery. Julio was perfectly at his ease. He kept his own place, and, what's more, kept Father Basil in his.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONTH OF MARY.

THE worthy Father Basil did ample justice to his dinner, in spite of his breakfast at Luchon. Had Julio offered him two cups of coffee he would not have declined them any more than he did the old cognac. The dinner, like those that followed it, was very cheerful, and the Capuchin found the wine of the presbytery excellent.

In the evening, he asked Julio to leave him the key of the sacristy, as he was in the habit of spending his nights in the church.

What strange inconsistencies there are in men's minds! This monk, so fond of eating, and who eschewed water with his wine, inflicted upon himself most lugubrious privations. Every night he passed in the church. There, seated in the first chair he came across in the nave, after having finished his meditations and prayers, he would fall asleep from sheer necessity—his feet on the cold stone, his limbs cramped by his position. After having spent the night thus unpleasantly, to say the least of it, he roused himself in the morning to go through his breviary—his physical condition better imagined than described.

The silence in old churches, peopled with

phantoms and dimly lighted with the pale altar lamp—the scampering of living things in the vaults—the shrill hootings of screech-owls alighting on the cornices—the eternal aves of the wind shaking the rafters—the weird echo from the cries of thousands of invisible creatures in the dim recesses of the roof or aisles—all these combined to distinguish the Capuchin's night by any thing but balmy repose. Often he relapsed in his dreams into the wildest paroxysms of terror, as though he were raving in apoplexy, screaming out to the Virgin to be good enough to help him; then he would suddenly awake, and recall his scattered senses by the aid of the sanctuary lamp and its evidence as to where he was, not a little relieved to ascertain that it was not hell after all.

The upright position which he was obliged to maintain lest he should roll on the damp pavement in his sleep affected, as may be supposed, his digestion, and so accounted for his dreams. His thirst was awful. His wine and coffee, so pleasant the day before, entirely disagreed with him. To be brief, he was in that state that nothing but brandy would do for him.

Had Father Basil liked, he might have revived in his own experience, for the edification of the faithful, the visions of St. Antony in the desert.

During the whole thirty days that he spent at St. Aventin Martha had not once to make his bed. But morning after morning the miserable fanatic was completely broken down. His huge flabby cheeks, so rosy in the daytime, were positively colorless, and blotched here and there with red patches, as though he had been connected with bloodshed.

The celebration of the mass soothed the poor wretch. His was a faith of instinct, utterly innocent of thought; so in the holy mysteries he found relief for the tumult begotten of wine and night-watching.

Often was Julio filled with pity for him, as, rising himself at an early hour from his bed, he rejoiced in a season of holy communing with his gracious Father.

"See," he thought, "where the exaggeration of any truth may lead a man. Here is this unhappy monk mortifying the flesh all the night through, while in the day he excites it with strong drink to the verge of intoxication. Is that evangelical mortification? O ye Christian fakirs, when will ye leave the Church?"

On the eve of the 1st of May the Capuchin commenced his mission by mounting the pulpit. He had once a fine voice; it was strong yet, but in tone like a cracked bell. Yet in spite of that he wouldn't for all the world have missed singing one of those old carols, in former days so popular in the country, before each of his sermons. That on the first day had the following refrain:

Accourez, peuple fidèle,
Venez à la mission,
Le Seigneur, qui vous appelle,
Veut votre conversion.

While the corpulent monk, whose size was somewhat excessive for Julio's little pulpit, was singing his canticle, with an instrumental accompaniment of expressive gestures and flashings as of fire from his eyes, the fascination was incredible. The gloom of night, too, would descend slowly upon the dimly-lighted nave, where the women were sitting huddled up, with the mountain men behind them, their huge hats in their hands, gazing at the preacher with his strange dress, red face, and harsh, fierce voice. People began to ask themselves whether it was some witches' festival they were at, or, at all events, whether they were really in the house of God, where they had been taught to worship in the beauty of holiness.

We shall not attempt to follow Father Basil through all his sermons; they were neither brilliant in argument nor style. At rare intervals, some flashings forth of an impassioned spirit caused a thrill to run through the audience—such as an orator can readily command. But it soon died off. There followed the usual commonplaces—apocryphal tales, expressions in bad taste, outrageous hyperboles, too frequent harshness of phrase, from which even the least refined would shrink. The whole thing resulted in a flaming affair, working the brain very uncomfortably, and exercising an effect upon the understanding akin to that of bad meat on the stomach. It was the old pulpit style adapted to country missions; a style actually extant in the present day, to the great grief of certain rural populations.

It was not very like Julio's. That excellent young gentleman amused himself at sly times by writing a veracious chronicle of the mission, containing the subjects of the sermons, the songs sung, and the singular narratives with which each discourse was enriched, as with plums. Unhappily, however, it has not turned up among his papers, beyond a few brief extracts.

Among Father Basil's theses were—Hell, the Judgment, Dancing, Sunday labor, the Rosary, and the devotion of the Sacred Heart.

But of all of these, that on the Rosary was the most original. Julio had it almost all down. We copy verbatim from his own manuscript:

"The protection of Mary is so assured to her worshipers that it extends even to the inferior creation. And here, my brethren, don't think I am inventing a story—it is quite authentic, and occurred in a town in Italy. In that country people are far more devoted to Mary than you are. Now, a lady had a parrot, and this parrot was very clever. But instead of teaching it to swear she instructed it to say 'Ave Maria!' One day, when the bird was on its perch before its mistress's door, a great hawk perceived it, and, pouncing down, carried it off in its talons, in the sight of the whole neighborhood, despite the poor thing's screams of despair. But, O marvel, scarcely had the bird felt itself done for, than it luckily remembered its devout prayer, and set to work to cry 'Ave Maria!' with all its lungs. The holy Virgin heard the

orison; for no sooner had the cry been raised than the hawk dropped his pray and fell to the earth struck by lightning.

"The fact has been attested by credible witnesses; and I have read it in a work devoted to the wonders of Mary."

He gave another, equally singular and authentic:

"One day a lady very devoted to the Virgin went on pilgrimage, unknown to her husband. She made sure of returning that night; but a very violent storm prevented her. The next day the poor woman reached her home greatly alarmed; for, you must know, her husband was a strict disciplinarian. To her surprise, however, he met her as though nothing had occurred. He had not been conscious of her absence.

"You see, my brethren, the holy Virgin had assumed the appearance of that pious lady, and attended to the little home-duties all the evening. Nor was she off till the *bona fide* wife arrived."

Julio had some difficulty in keeping from a roar of laughter as he ran over in his mind all the conceivable occupations of Mary on that eventful evening. So the sermon was not utterly lost, in point of effect.

Next to the glories of Mary came those of Joseph. Indeed, that saint had one discourse all to himself.

"We have had good right to assure you that the faithful worshippers of Mary will never perish. And now I shall remind you" (and here he made a vigorous demonstration)—"now I shall remind you that the same fact holds good with reference to her husband."

On the night of that sermon he distributed, at the door of the church, an appropriate little book, as a precious remembrance of the mission, recommending it to those whose scholarship was up to the mark for evening reading at home.

His liberality produced quite a sensation among the peasants—not very much given to making presents themselves, but particularly fond of getting them. The audience swelled visibly from the day that the father announced that he meant to distribute similar books, medals, and the loveliest images every night running.

Meanwhile the sermons went on. Enraptured with the size of his congregation, the orator set no limits to the wildness of his myths or the sternness of his asceticism.

One evening he preached to the indifferent, and related the adventures of a nun who used to communicate regularly, but who, nevertheless, one morning, found herself possessed with a devil. He pictured the state of those people in such sort that the few women present who were regular in their devotions were horribly alarmed. And when the assembly was breaking up, one of them, naturally very excitable, planted herself before the door of the church, yelling out, "I am possessed with a devil. Father, come and exorcise me!" and went off into frightful convulsions, ending by going mad.

The reverend father was mightily in favor of exorcism; but Julio was for the doctor. She was conveyed to a hospital in Luchon, to the great disgust of the Capuchin, who thought the matter ought to have been regarded by no means from a medical point of view. He had missed a fine opportunity of being disagreeable to the devil, by driving him from his quarters.

Julio saw at once the danger of this sort of thing. He was not disposed, however, to go to war with the archbishop by sending the Capuchin about his business. Faithful to his obligations as a priest, he maintained his constant spirit of submission to authorized power, and courtesy to all.

So he tolerated the monk, giving him good dinners and capital wine, only, while Father Basil was over his bottle, he took a mild revenge by mischievous gnat-like teasings which almost turned the old gentleman's brain.

"Ah, father," he would say, "you take a world of useless trouble. How can you ever expect my people to understand your disquisitions on asceticism?"

"Oh, they understand well enough. The Spirit of God speaks to the little and the ignorant."

"Beyond a doubt, when you teach them practical things capable of being understood by them, such as daily family duties, the endurance of common hardships, the forgiveness of injuries."

"Piety is of universal range."

"No denying that; but what is piety but duty accomplished? These men who listen to you every evening, because your strong voice, your gestures, your eloquent use of illustration arrests them—do you know what manner of men they are? They are foresters, laborers, ~~herds~~ men, or smugglers under the name of 'izzard hunters.' It's about all that a priest can do to convince them that they have a soul in the image of God, and that they will have to give account of their life. They fear the devil more than God, and have more faith in sorcerers than in all the missionaries that ever lived. Impregnated with all sorts of superstitions, they demoralize religion itself. Not unfrequently they come to me asking me to give them a mass to revenge themselves on some one who had injured them, either (as they fancy) by bewitching their cattle, or making one of their children waste away under the 'evil-eye.' Add to this what is notorious of their morals and habits, and you have a fair idea of your present congregation. Alas! alas! try to induce them to be Christians before you attempt to make them mystics. Set before them truth and right, that they may learn what these are and begin at last to be men. At present, as soon as you are gone, they will be exactly as you found them."

"Do you think so, Mr. Vicar? You take a despondent view."

"Despondent if you will; but I'm right for all that."

"But you would dispense with missions?"

"I can't say I see them to be indispensable."

"But how would you dispose of the precept, 'Go and teach?'"

"Quite another matter that. Missions and teaching are two entirely different things."

"According to that, then, we religious missionaries are good for nothing."

"Those were not my words."

"But not far from them."

And the Capuchin, draining off a parting bumper of mulled Spanish wine, smuggled (we must acknowledge) into St. Aventin, rose, and darting a furious look at his opponent, retired to prepare for his evening performance.

Monks are infallible, be it remembered, it doesn't do to contradict them.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOTHER JUDAS.

AMONG the more apparently devout of Julio's parishioners was one lady of enthusiastic profession, whom, with all his simple straightforwardness and his horror of pharisaism and underhand doings, he could not help displeasing. This dame, whom Louise, when she had got to know her thoroughly, called Mother Judas, belonged to the highly respectable family of Montréjeau. She had tried three or four religious orders; but her restless disposition, jealous temperament, and conceit had prevented her from settling in any. After having lived turn-about at Tarbes, Toulouse, and St. Gaudens, she had established herself at St. Aventin, where the fresh air, she said, invigorated her nerves, and where she subsisted on a pension allowed her by her family. This Madame de la Caprède, banished to the mountains, began to get old in every thing but mind. All that she had acquired in her convent life, of intolerance, love of power, and habits of espionage, she practiced on a large scale at St. Aventin. At the same time, with these heavy drawbacks, due to her religious training and natural character, she combined qualities which endeared her to the mountaineers. Hence for many years she had been—by means of young girls whom she had entrapped into societies of the Rosary, the Sacré-Cœur, and the Scapular, with others of the same kind enriched by indulgences by the Pope—the centre of every religious movement in the place. In a word, Madame de la Caprède was the female vicar of the parish.

As she had kept up to some extent her convent dress, the general public, which is not over-particular as to accuracy in such matters, called her *sister*, others mother, while the young girls, who acknowledged her as their lady abbess, saluted her, each one, as "My good mother."

Her disposition was only to love those whom she could bind to her allegiance. Julio's predecessor, a childish dotard, had been led by her to such an extent that he did nothing without her advice. So when Julio arrived on the scene she took great pains to be among the first to meet

him. He had been forewarned of her, indeed, at T——, by one of his fellow-students, who had told him there was an evil-minded bigot in his parish, against whom he would have to be on his guard, describing the individual in question. Consequently he received her courteously, indeed, as was his habit, but with considerable caution.

The Sunday after his installation she was his first penitent. Having completed her confession, she begged him to allow her a few minutes more.

"Father, it would be as well that we should be intimate," she said: "I have some influence in the parish, having lived here for many years. My independent position enables me to be of use."

And then she went on to unfold cleverly a cut-and-dried scheme of hers, well calculated to take in any man less on the alert than Julio.

The practical bearing of all which was that he was to understand that she had all the young women of the parish in her power. She was ready to enlighten him on all description of family matters, and so further his usefulness very materially. Thus establishing his influence over the future mothers of the parish, he would be able to reduce it to a most admirable pattern system. In short, she proposed to the young pastor a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive.

Julio at first contented himself with replying by monosyllables to her fine speeches—"Yes, yes; we shall see;" but said with such a tone that the old woman, who was sharp enough to have detected twenty Julios, was in no way deceived, but saw at once that the bait had not been swallowed. Then, changing her mode of attack, and employing all the address that a woman's wit could command, she managed, by clever twistings of the conversation, to tell him that she had conceived the highest idea of his talents, merit, and capacity; that she had often heard of the secretary of the late cardinal from a T—— clergyman, who had deeply interested her in his history; and that she would be most thankful to be guided by him, and to follow in every thing his enlightened counsels.

Julio, on whom all these pretty remarks took no more effect than they would have done on one of those granite specimens which he had shown to Father Basil, thought it necessary to wind up the conference a little summarily, the more so as it threatened to be rather protracted.

"I shall be ever at your service, my dear sister, in matters relating to your conscience. As for the direction of the parish, believe me, I should shrink instinctively from employing any means but those which the Church provides in pulpit teaching. There I have my people before me, I instruct and counsel them; the rest is with God."

And so saying he relapsed into an icy silence. Then, after a moment in which each felt a thrill of repugnance for the other, he added,

"Have you any thing further to say?"

She was conquered for once; and, thrown

back upon herself, like a boar unable to break the net in which it had been captured, resigned herself to matters of a private and personal character.

Would he let her communicate daily (the tone was painfully agitated now), as her dear old confessor that was gone had done?

"As for that, sister, that's a serious matter, which I will not settle to-day. I find daily communion is too much for the priest. The Church has only sanctioned it under compulsion, and because of the necessities of the ministry. The exception has, in point of fact, become the rule. But I do not recognize the necessity in the case of persons who, like yourself, make a profession of piety. Communicate to-day and next Thursday. We will make any further arrangement by-and-by."

That utterly unlooked-for decision fell like a thunder-bolt on her wretched head.

As soon as he had pronounced the benediction and closed the grating she retired, her face purple with suppressed passion and her eyes wild with excitement. Kneeling down and clenching her head between her hands, as she bent on the front of her seat, she whispered to herself, "This man is no priest."

And from that moment she regarded him with implacable hatred.

That he should have resented her aid, she said, must have arisen from inexperience in parish matters, or else, possibly, from defiance of one whom he didn't know. But that he should have ventured to deprive her, "the good mother," of her daily communion—one who, for ten years under the previous vicar, had blessed the parish—one by common consent a saint, and nothing short of it—it was positively fearful! Then, too, what would they say in the place? What wouldn't they think when they saw her so many days absent from the holy table?

A perfect turmoil of extravagant thoughts whirled in her excited brain. Should she not write to the archbishop, and complain of the act of injustice? But no—the archbishop would reply that he had nothing to do with such matters, of which the confessor only was a competent judge. Should she implore the young vicar not to deprive her of her old privileges? Alas! he did not seem a promising subject for softening. She would run a risk of failing; and could she brook a refusal at her age? Should she come to the altar every morning and set him at defiance? No, that would be nonsense, an unseemly fight. She was averse to scandals.

The only thought absent from all this elaborate soliloquy was the thought of God.

Julio, on the other hand, who never temporized with his conscience, was inflexible in the course he had resolved upon, and made no change.

One day, indeed, he brought matters to a crisis. After many lamentations, sighs, and bewailings from Madame de Caprède, called forth by his obduracy in adhering to a decision which she assured him was to her worse than death:

"Do not force me to say," he quietly replied, "that in the condition of mind in which I believe you to be at this moment I should consider it an extreme indulgence to permit you to communicate at Easter."

The veil fell from her eyes. She saw that she was found out, and ventured neither reply nor murmur. But the sword pierced her soul. She hated Julio before, now she was bent on revenge. She would be his perpetual spy. "Scirent si ignoscere Manes."

The house of Madame de la Caprède being close to the Parsonage, she had distinctly seen the stranger, with whose history we are already acquainted, enter the church, but she had not seen her leave. Curious to understand this, she kept up a late watch as the night drew on. As soon, however, as she heard Julio drawing, as usual, the heavy bolts of the church door, she concluded that the young girl, whom she supposed to have come on a pilgrimage to St. Aventin, had passed out under the wall unperceived.

Among her convent habits which she still kept up was one of rising at daybreak and lighting a lamp to perform her early devotions, on which occasions she was arrayed in an immense black hood, such as the Pyrenean females always wear at church.

As ill-luck would have it, she happened to raise her eyes to her room window just as Julio was escorting the young girl from the presbytery the first thing in the morning, and setting her on the road to Luchon. She recognized them at once, and came to her own conclusions, without attempting to conceive of any possible explanation. Had the girl been a relation, she would not have arrived so late to leave so early; had she been a pilgrim, he would have lodged her in the village, and not have compromised himself by sheltering her in the presbytery. She branded him at once as the worst of men, and bewailed the day that made him her spiritual guide.

The arrival of Father Basil was a great comfort to her. She went every three or four days to confess to him; and the Capuchin was not the man to rebuff one apparently so eager for his ministration, and whom he had begun to regard as a saint. The first day she went to him she complained of her desolate condition in that place, and of the scant spiritual advantage to be derived from so young a priest, and one so little devoted to his ministry.

"It is very true, my dear daughter, you have just cause for complaint; but you must submit to your heavy cross."

"It is indeed heavy, father. Happily God has sent you to me, as an angel of comfort to sustain me at a time when the trial would have overwhelmed me. Oh, my father, forgive my unreserve, but I have suffered fearfully since the archbishop sent us that wretched man."

"Explain yourself, daughter; you are well aware that one of the chief objects of monseigneur in dispatching me to St. Aventin was that

I might be able to watch this priest, whom he has sent here in sheer compassion, being unwilling to cast him off after all his irregularities, telling me at the same time that he thought him very foolish."

"Ah, father, if he were only foolish!....."

"What are you driving at? Have you any serious charge to urge against him?"

"My father, I can not; it would be too painful. Pray excuse me."

This intentional reserve of Madame de la Caprède served only, as she intended, to excite the monk to the highest pitch of curiosity; he began to feel the spirit of an inquisitor rising within him.

"In the name of God, my daughter, in the name of our holy religion, I command you to tell me all the truth. We dare not have a scandal unexposed in the sanctuary. Christ expelled the buyers and sellers from the temple with a whip of small cords."

The comparison was not a happy one. However, the remembrance of the Master's zeal against the profaners of the temple excited Father Basil's enthusiasm.

"Let this example, daughter, teach us. Let us not listen to the dictates of a false charity when we are called upon to detect the hidden leper, and prevent his leprosy from infecting the flock. Courage, daughter, I command you to tell me every thing, in the name of God."

Which were the very words that the old fire-brand had wanted him to say.

"Well, my revered father, since God commands me by your mouth I must obey, let it cost me what it will. I will tell you what I saw in very simple words, leaving it to your wisdom to decide whether a parish may safely be trusted any longer to such a man."

And then, without omitting the least apparently unfavorable circumstance, she told him all she had witnessed: how the young girl had arrived in the evening, had crept into the church in the hope that she had not been observed, and had left in the morning before daylight.

"And now you know the cause of my anguish, father. Had I not a house here I would leave this accursed place at once, and shun any further intercourse with this sacrilegious priest. True, my personal wrongs are nothing in comparison with what I have just told you; yet I may say he has so far carried his contempt for his religious duties as to forbid me daily communion. He is graciously pleased to allow me this privilege on Sundays and Thursdays. So you may imagine, father, what a state I am in."

"I'll soon settle that matter, dear daughter, only, as all that you have told me has been under the seal of confession, I dare not divulge what I have heard. I am supposed when we part to be as though I had never known any thing you may have said. In order, therefore, that I may make use of the information I have just received for the purpose of drawing up a detailed report to the archbishop, I must get

your permission to divulge it, as though it had simply been told in a private conversation."

"I shrink greatly, father, from acting as an informer."

"An informer, daughter, by no means. In piously advertising the authorities of such irregularities you are only doing your duty."

"If it is so, then I authorize you to make use of my confession for the purpose of putting the archbishop in possession of the facts of the case."

And that very day the Capuchin having made up his mind to forward to T—— without delay a fatal report of Julio, took his place at the altar without the slightest hesitation, and administered the communion to his bigoted confidante.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MIRACLE.

FOREMOST among the St. Aventin girls over whom Madame de la Caprède exercised a most absolute sovereignty was Lisette Cabarous. She was a nervous, impulsive little thing, addicted to hysterics, and, thanks to an imagination which the worthy mother had been at the pains to inflame to the very highest conceivable degree, on the verge of ranging in the wildest order of visionaries. Night after night, and all the night long, she heard voices. Often she awoke to find herself standing erect on the foot-board of her bed, half-way between earth and heaven, in a state of ecstasy. Her intellect had decided limits, and the development of her judgment and common sense was in an inverse ratio to that of her years and visionary faculties.

Unfortunately, she was an only child. Her father was one of the richest proprietors in the valley. The young lady, exempted from that outdoor work which would have proved an admirable antidote for her peculiarities, divided her whole day between the church, Madame Caprède, and reading the devotional books with which her library was stocked, and to which she had most carefully added those distributed by Father Basil.

Madame de la Caprède was immensely devoted to St. Joseph. At the time of the proclamation of the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, an ecclesiastic tolerably up in history had told her that Dr. Gerson had wished to proclaim, at the council of Constance, the immaculate conception of St. Joseph—an idea which had taken profound hold of her intellect. Why should St. Joseph, her private saint, be grudged the privileges conceded to the Virgin? she would ask.

The little work on St. Joseph which the Capuchin had distributed had not failed to excite her to still deeper devotion: the result being that it was finally decided in committee, by the mother and her angelic young supporters, that St. Joseph next year was to have the whole of the month of March to himself.

What a blessing it would be if they could per-

suade Father Basil to take up this little matter in the pulpit!

Lisette Cabarous had been tremendously struck with the monk. His great gown of gray woolen cloth, his heavy cowl, rope girdle, shaved head, bare feet—not to mention his beard, which, according to the proverb, was half the business—had told upon her. The form that dress concealed belonged not to a man, but to an angel.

From the day of his first appearance in the pulpit of St. Aventin she divided her entire time between the church and Madame de la Caprède, going home only to eat and sleep. Yet further copying her patroness, whom she followed in every thing with ape-like fidelity, she took to very early rising and quiet visits to the revered old lady.

"Mother beloved! it is your Lisette" (here a gentle tap at the door); "she has come to join you in your morning prayer."

Of course she let slip no opportunity of having an interview with the Capuchin. She managed so well that, alleging a desire to make great progress to perfection by commencing a new life more separated from herself and every thing of a material character, urging, moreover, her anxiety to make the reverend father as thoroughly acquainted as possible with the state of her soul, in order the better to ascertain what her vocation was, she presented herself almost daily at the confessional during the first fifteen days of Father Basil's presence in St. Aventin.

Ardent and susceptible in the highest degree, drinking in deep draughts of his words as greedily as a sun-scorched flower drinks in the pleasant rain, she became, with all the simplicity of a child and the burning aspirations of a Magdalen, the darling of the moment—one of those privileged favorites on whom worthy priests lavish, without the least misgiving, terms of the tenderest endearment, never thinking that human hearts are weak, and human heads capable of easy turning.

On the 16th of May Lisette came to the mother before daylight in an ecstasy of enthusiasm. She told her, with trembling eagerness, that on the previous night, as she entered her room, at one end of which she had constructed a small oratory to St. Joseph, the image of the saint appeared to be suddenly illuminated, swelled to life-size, and marched toward her.

"Daughter," it observed, "the faithful are very rude to me. I am not jealous of my most holy and most admirable wife the Virgin Mary; but since she has been declared immaculate, I may remark that I am immaculate also. For you will see at once that, standing to her in the relation in which I do, I could not well be otherwise."

Whereupon the apparition stepped back slowly, and by the time it had reached the end of the apartment subsided into the original image.

Lisette had hardly commenced thanking the saint for the honor of the visit when he appeared a second time, and, approaching her, said:

"You are the lady, daughter, who will be ap-

pointed to inform my Church that the moment has arrived for awarding me like honors with those which have fallen to the lot of my most holy and most admirable wife."

Losing all consciousness, she found herself next morning in the attitude in which the saint had left her, having passed the night with angels, saints, monks, choirs of virgins, and Father Basil, while the coronation of St. Joseph had been the central event of her dreams.

"Tell it to the reverend father, my dear child; tell it him at once, before mass. It is a revelation—a miracle—yes, a miracle."

And as soon as it was light the mother posted off with Lisette to the church, like one possessed, crying, "A miracle! a miracle!"

Father Basil was by the confessional, waiting for his customary penitents.

Soon Lisette knelt before the grating, and the monk hastily disappeared behind the curtain. She narrated her vision at once, and wound up by asking him if he thought that St. Joseph was favorably disposed to her.

"Yes, beloved daughter; and here is a proof that he would have you dedicate yourself to him. He will be your protector. Meanwhile, we must see about disseminating the tidings of this event. Yours is a great, a holy mission; and I thank God for permitting such brilliant displays of His glory. We live in an age of miraculous revelations. Yours will be added to those of Salette and Lourdes. Happy child, your name will be mentioned every where with Mélanie and Bernadette. Do you authorize me to write an account of it?"

"With all my heart, father."

"We must have a mass to thank God, in your name, for this manifestation. Be assured that great good will result from it to the parish and the entire mountain."

In a very few hours, thanks to the combined indefatigable efforts of the mother and her young sisterhood, St. Aventin and all the valley rang with the event.

The monk, who thoroughly went in for the whole thing, and was taken up, moreover, with the report he purposed making of it to the archbishop, scarcely spoke a word at breakfast; and leaving the table hastily—not, however, without doing full justice to food and wine—withdrew to his own apartment, to give a final touch to his manuscript account.

Julio, having no calls upon his time in the middle of the day, went for a quiet walk. The flowers were blossoming almost under his eyes, in those parts where the snow had disappeared.

Returning to dinner, he found groups of mountaineers assembled in the little market-place of St. Aventin, and evident signs of great excitement in the village. He had scarcely sat down to table with the monk, when Martha, full of the grand occurrence herself, and noticing that her master appeared to be ignorant of it, exclaimed,

"Then you don't know what has happened, M. le Curé?"

"What, Martha?"

"Lor'! that is strange!—that M. le Curé is the only person in St. Aventin who doesn't know of this miracle, as every body is talking about from here to Luchon. Ah, it's wonderful that! Why, there's the mother wild about it. She's so pleased; and I'm a-trembling so, I can scarce speak."

"What miracle do you allude to?"

"Why, M. le Curé, sure the miracle as have happened to Lisette Cabarous."

"Well, and what more?"

"Oh, the reverend father knows all about it; he will tell you better nor me. Madame de la Caprède said that he was a-going to write an account of it to the archbishop."

"It's quite true, M. le Curé," said Father Basil, thinking it time to strike in: "an event of great importance—a miraculous revelation has occurred in the parish. Yesterday evening it pleased God to intimate His will by word of mouth to a young saint—I may say a young angel. Surely such a fact is enough to make a pastor's heart overflow with joy, and his eyes with tears."

"Not so fast, my reverend father. Before I proceed to weep, let me know what I am to weep for. What is this manifestation made to Miss Cabarous?—a young lady, I may remark in passing, all nerves and ecstasies. Miracles are easy with such temperaments. But let that pass. God spoke by Balaam's ass."

"Just like you. You would seek by buffoonery to....."

"By no means. I've good reason for smiling at her visions. This is the fifth she has had by her own account. I recommended her to be prudently quiet on such points, and she was sensible enough at one time to take my advice. But come, tell me the whole affair, if there's any thing in it."

Whereupon the monk, delighted to come over the incredulous vicar, repeated, almost word for word, his written account of the matter, considerably enlarged and embellished by his imagination.

"Is that all, reverend father?"

"All! Why, you are unreasonable! What more would you have?"

"Merely a brain uncrazed, nerves undiseased, and something better for a subject than a little hysterical child."

"Quite so: there speaks science! You are only warming up the skeptic's argument that ecstasies and revelations are simply the results of hysteria. Can you question the good faith of this girl? Isn't she a straightforward, truthful witness, incapable of forging a lie? Now when such a witness of such a miracle is evidently neither deceived nor a deceiver, what reasonable doubt can you oppose to what she says? By your theory the most undisputed miracles, such as those in the Gospels, would be assailed. Come, did that girl wish to take us in?"

"No, poor child! I know her to be too honest and simple for that."

"Could she be taken in herself?"

"Oh! nothing easier."

"What! do you mean to say that she didn't hear what she says she heard?—that the venerable personage who said to her, 'I am Joseph,' and spoke of the Virgin as his wife, was not Joseph? Who was he then? A supernatural event comes either from God or the devil. But the latter can have no interest in spreading the worship of St. Joseph. So he is innocent of this phenomenon. Answer me now."

"That's readily done, father. I am sorry to say that your dilemma is not insurmountable. Besides visions attributable to the two sources you name there are those of an overexcited brain—hallucinations and delusions, not to mention the mistaking a simple dream for a genuine apparition. Before we credit a supernatural account it should be established to our satisfaction that the witness could not be deceived into regarding as an indisputable fact what was but the effect of chronic nightmare. When you have proved this much of that silly little Lisette I will begin to discuss the particulars of the revelation. Till then I see only in this the fifth edition of similar marvels which have greeted my ears since I came to this place. I had succeeded in quieting a little her excited brain. Her father, a worthy, sensible man, who was exceedingly distressed at seeing her in a state of mind declared by the doctor to be so fatal to the health at her particular age, came only the other day to thank me for my advice to his daughter, assuring me that her hysterical attacks had been fewer for some time past. And now here she is beginning all over again. In my judgment, they are very infatuated or very wicked who encourage her to believe that she is inspired."

These last words were a heavy blow to the incautious monk. He felt his enthusiasm cooling down, and a small remnant of reason urged him to the reflection that perhaps he had gone a little too far. Had not the report to the archbishop been in the postman's hands at that moment it is probable that he would have hesitated to send it. But it was too late to retract now.

Moreover, it was too much to expect, from his monastic dignity, that he should be silent under the good sense and sound judgment of a young priest whom he had so shamefully and contemptibly slandered. Yet, even in the most bigoted minds, conscience speaks at times, and for a moment Father Basil listened to her voice, and felt the risings of remorse. Then, shaking off the better feeling, he summoned up once more all the haughtiness and infallibility of the monk.

"M. le Curé, there is another who will judge of this matter. I have reported it to the archbishop: his highness will decide."

Julio made no answer; his silence and the dignified look he bestowed on the Capuchin served as a concluding chastisement.

Once committed to this silly business, Father Basil suffered nothing to stop him. To have paused would have been to acknowledge that the

priest was right and he was wrong; to deceive the enthusiastic Lisette, and to expose himself to a charge of inconsistency from Mother Caprède—with whom he had already gone so far in the matter.

That evening there was a tightly-packed crowd round the church; and scarcely had the first stroke of the bell rung through the valley, where it was echoed back from rock to rock, than the people, roused to the highest excitement by the news of the miracle, broke into the building like a resistless wave, filled in a few minutes the nave, side aisles, and chapels, and went so far as to establish themselves on the ascent to the altar. A mob is excitable, even in reference to that which is most sacred. They won't allow their feelings to be trifled with. That day they were thoroughly taken up with a miracle of most marvelous proportions. So Julio and the monk had the utmost difficulty to keep the sanctuary free; while the latter was steaming all over when he appeared in the pulpit.

As, with all his righteous anger against Julio, he had in no way fallen off in zealous activity at his recent repast, he brought his usual amount of fever-heated eloquence to bear upon the subject. Alluding to the size of the concourse, he observed that he fully understood what that ardent, upturned gaze—the most ardent he had ever beheld—demanded from him. Then he enlarged upon the miraculous revelation which had been vouchsafed to her who, he said, would be the glory of St. Avenin through coming ages. He adduced a large number of similar occurrences, inferring thence that truth was on the side of the Catholics; that they alone were miraculously aided in maintaining and developing it. He acknowledged that the manifestation to Lisette Cabarous could only be regarded as reliable, and entitled to respect, after the archbishop had passed canonical judgment upon it; but took care to add that he had no doubt whatever that that sanction would be obtained. Finally, he congratulated the happy St. Avenin people on having been visited by God, as Abraham was by the angels, in the person of one of the holiest and simplest of their children, with a view to the promotion in the world of the worship of great St. Joseph.

This sermon roused all present to enthusiasm. The news of the occurrence spread in a few days through all the valleys from Valcabrière and St. Béat to the most distant mountain fastnesses. The next Sunday more than 10,000 persons thronged the Luchon road: some having come even from the valley of Arreau, which had only been accessible a few days. The excitement was extraordinary. The monk, wild with exultation, extemporized a pulpit on the spot where the people had congregated, and addressed them with his customary perspiring vehemence, being interrupted from time to time by frantic cries—“Yes, a miracle! a miracle!”

During this tremendous manifestation of popular feeling Julio maintained a discreet silence. Had any one ventured to oppose the general be-

lief, even though he were the vicar of St. Avenin himself, he would have been torn in pieces, like another Pentheus, by another horde of Bacchants.

He had scarcely returned to the presbytery with the monk, impressed with the deepest compassion for the excited people and the fanatical Capuchin, when a woman and child, rather carried than escorted by the delirious crowd, reached the door. The good woman asserted, in the presence of Father Basil, who had staid his willingness to receive any depositions calculated to confirm the recent occurrence, that her young child, aged seven, on the same evening that Lisette Cabarous had encountered her little experience, had heard a voice saying so distinctly that there could be no mistake about it, “Devotion ought to be rendered to St. Joseph quite as much as to Mary.”

The monk's face brightened. He took down with great solemnity the depositions of this lady, supported by several witnesses.

As soon as she had gone he burst out,

“Now, M. le Curé, is there any thing to question here? See how it confirms the revelation made to that blessed child.”

For answer Julio shrugged his shoulders.

“Well, what have you got to say?” asked the monk, with visible satisfaction.

“That such evidence is simply ridiculous.”

The Capuchin boiled over.

“Ha! Evidence ridiculous! Pray, Mr. Vicar, don't you happen to be aware that holy bishops have received as true similar statements of voices heard only by infant ears, even by infants of five years of age? Here is a case of seven: the age which the Church has assigned as that at which children can discern. The wind bloweth where it listeth. ‘Ex ore infantium perfecti laudem.’”

The delighted monk had slipped in a bit of Latin.

Before night two new miracles were added to his list.

An old woman, afflicted with a malady which had been pronounced incurable by the doctors, informed Father Basil that, having suddenly applied to St. Joseph, she had got better immediately. She came, in fact, to the presbytery shouting—“A miracle! a miracle! St. Joseph has cured me!”

A lame lady also called, and stated that, having asked St. Joseph, on the strength of the appearance which he had made to Lisette Cabarous, to be good enough to look at her leg, after a cracking sound inside it had recovered its old position so thoroughly that she was now able to use it without the slightest difficulty.

“In good truth,” said the monk, when he was alone with Julio, “that man must be very obstinate who will not recognize in all these facts a proof of divine intervention.”

“It is very clear,” was the answer, “that you can have no conception of similar facts accomplished in due physiological course without any supernatural aid. Such mighty influences have

been wrought in the system by excitements of the brain that astounding results have followed. The son of a certain King of Lydia cried out to a soldier who was on the point of killing his royal father, 'Soldier, do not kill Croesus!' The child had been dumb till then; but at the sight of that imminent peril he recovered his speech. Bedridden paralytics have made use of all their limbs in escaping from a hospital on fire. Then there are the still better substantial facts in connection with St. Médard. And do you suppose with the Jansenists, reverend father, that each of these strange occurrences was a direct exhibition of miraculous power? Medical science proves that there have been cures of all kinds wrought through the imagination, especially among ladies, in circumstances the most extraordinary, and often in the prospect of imminent death. Doctors are too sensible to call such healings miracles: let us imitate them in this matter."

And so the discussion terminated.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSIONARY RETIRES.

It is a sorrowful fact that every thing has an end in this world of ours: the delights of the richest entertainments, the enjoyments of the most brilliant gatherings, even the bliss of sitting under Capuchin preachers.

The customary wind-up of the May observance came to an end with what is called in missionary parlance "final adieus." Father Basil was great at tears; fortified by a good meal he was ready for any amount of them. Now weeping is as contagious, in its way, as yawning; and when that fat voice had reached the lachrymose point a heart-rending cry ran through the entire audience, mingled with sobs verging on suffocation. So it fell out that they were striking "adieus" at St. Avenin—a regular tip-top farewell.

Each had a separate good-by. Farewell to the holy protecting angels, to St. Avenin, patron of the parish—a worthy saint dreadfully neglected, and deserving of recognition from Father Basil, who named him then for the first time.

Farewell to the mayor, to those venerable fathers of families, patriarchs of the mountains, who treasured up in their hearts the tradition of the faith of their ancestors. Farewell to those estimable matrons who had transmitted that faith, together with the earliest imbibed nourishment, to a Christian race. Farewell to the pious children—girls holy as angels—the lily crown of the militant Church.

Farewell to the venerated Madame de la Caprède, the blessed directress of those fair associations that were maintaining a seraphic earnestness in the minds of the young.

Farewell to that predestined angel, Lisette Cabarous, that lowly mountain flower, that child of inspiration to whom had been revealed the

glorious truth of the Immaculate Conception of St. Joseph.

Farewell, finally, to all—old and young, rich and poor, through all the parish, among the brightest and the best of those faithful to the Church.

Only the vicar was excepted. By way of compensation the Capuchin, on quitting the presbytery, stammered out some phrases of mock civility, to which Julio returned the following reply:

"Reverend father, custom would require from me an acknowledgment of your services; but I can not deceive you. I can find only one thing to thank you for—your purpose, which I believe to have been honest. I am confident that you came here with the idea of doing good. Unfortunately, by your ill-considered zeal, you have completely failed in your object; on the one hand, you have overexcited a quiet people, you have kindled up within them that superstitious impulse which tends to create forgetfulness of God, while it absorbs the soul in a host of puerilities unworthy of that mighty and magnificent creed proclaimed by the Gospel and the Church. You have diminished the growth of true religion among us; puffed up with hopeless conceit our women, old and young, who regard piety as a thing of feeling, and devotional exercises as the pastime of an indolent and useless life. On the other hand, you have lent no aid in exterminating those vices with which our poor mountaineers are penetrated through and through. I do not blame you for your clemency; I am disposed to it myself. God is a father to console, not a master to strike down. At the same time you have recklessly absolved all these men who would have been pointed at through the whole parish had they not 'gained their mission,' without reflecting that to-morrow they will relapse with renewed energy into their old iniquities.

"You have listened only to the applause of a few devotees, whose heads are turned about you, and whom you have styled at the confessional your beloved children; while sensible men, fathers of families, of upright Christian character, have come and told me 'that you are foolish and rash, that you have half-crazed their young people, addressing them in terms not expected from your profession and position.'

"It is extremely painful to me to have to say all this to you; but such is the impression your visit has made on the thinking part of my flock. You would doubtless wish me to be frank; at all events I have done my duty now. You have found in your missionary experience at least one honest vicar, and that is the conviction with which I would desire to be associated in your memory. Reverend father, I wish you good-morning!"

The apostle of the cottages, the child of St. Francis, found at the door of the presbytery a carriage which he had ordered from Luchon. Martha brought out his traveling-bag, and received his blessing for her pains.

The enthusiastic portion of the people crowd-

ed round. Cries of "Long live the good father!" echoed on every side.

Although the worthy Basil was in no small degree mortified at perceiving neither the reverend mother nor her charming flock at hand to receive a parting word, he was so set up with this ovation, which had diminished in some degree from the sting of Julio's lecture, that he rode on to the point where the road diverges toward the chapel.

When, O sweet surprise! Lo, oriflammes were fluttering in the wind! A large banner, inscribed with the legend, in golden characters, "Glory to St. Joseph the Immaculate!" is carried aloft by Lisette Cabarous, while twenty young girls with lily wreaths in their hands follow the miraculous infant. Madame de la Caprède, in the full view of the delighted Capuchin, heads the procession, and, surrounded by a select female assemblage of those who had taken most kindly to the various exercises of the mission, gives the signal, whereat the choir chants a canticle composed by her in honor of St. Joseph and Father Basil, and which may be freely translated as follows:

To Joseph immaculate, glory be!
And good Father Basil—long live he!
Tempted by a world so wooing,
Roved our hearts to their undoing,
When, to save from dire disaster,
Joseph sent a worthy pastor.
Father Basil, all celestial,
Came to our abode terrestrial;
So of such a marked attention
Make we loving, grateful mention.

To Joseph immaculate, glory be!
And good Father Basil—long live he!

This display had been secretly contrived and carried out by the reverend authoress without Julio's knowledge. It would be difficult to set forth the father's transports on seeing himself the object of so unexceptionable an ovation. Arriving opposite the oriflammes, he hastened to alight, having heard with gratified complacency the verses to St. Joseph and himself. True, the monk had the best of it in the intentional award of honor; but it is not on record that his colleague in the couplets felt the disparagement.

Madame de la Caprède's muse appeared to Father Basil to have spread her venerable wings in a flight more triumphant than any achieved in the songs of Lamartine or Victor Hugo. As has already been remarked, brandy had softened his heart. Julio, thankful to be rid of him at any cost, had allowed him as much as he could carry, and the stirrup cup had been drained more times than once. Hence the good father was so touched that salt drops of joy ran down his glittering countenance. How could the mother and her daughters help weeping with him? and thus bathed in briny floods they entered the church. Then the monk, at the foot of the altar, gave his last farewell to his beloved children. He thanked them for the delight they had just afforded him, lavished on them anew his invaluable advice, and finally recommended

them to St. Joseph. Rising by rapid flight to a thrilling climax, he cried out,

"Thanks to thee, illustrious saint, for having deigned to honor my ministry in this parish by the revelation of thy glories. Immaculate Joseph! protect these young ones who are assembled here. And you, my children, should it ever be said to you by any, that that apparition of the saint was a delusion, believe it not. Do you not realize its truth in your hearts? See you not by these your transports of affection, that St. Joseph alone can have inspired you? Then set those at defiance, whoever they may be, whatever their dignity—were they even priests themselves—who should dare to cast a doubt on the illustrious favor accorded to Lisette Cabarous! And you, my daughter, if any one should tell you that, for prudential reasons, you had better be silent on the question of these revelations, answer boldly, that the light of God must not be put under a bushel, and that were you even required to die for your declaration of the divine gift, you would not hesitate a single moment. Follow the advice of that pious servant of the Lord who has hitherto directed you in those glorious paths wherein St. Joseph the immaculate has caused you to walk. Listen only to her; believe her word alone. There are instances of God's withdrawing from those whom He seemed to have chosen. When Saul was rejected, he was forsaken by the Spirit, anointed though he was, and God was no longer with him. And similarly do they fare who presume to set limits to the Divine power, who greet the recital of the wonders of the spiritual life with smiles of contempt, and doubt the manifestations of the Virgin and her immaculate spouse. All anointed though they are, they are disowned and cast off."

This philippic, in which the slaps at Julio were too obvious to be mistaken, even by the least acute, was of tolerably long duration. Meanwhile the hour drew on when the Capuchin was expected at Luchon, even the breakfast hour; and Father Basil knew well that his intended host never waited for a dilatory guest. The appalling thought roused him from his ecstasy. He quitted the chapel after a last benediction to the interesting flock, accompanied by a fresh outpouring of sobs and tears. Lisette, especially, was in a condition unsettled, to say the least of it; so much so that Madame de la Caprède had to carry her. Just as the father mounted the step of the carriage the hopeful pair approached, clamoring for a parting blessing. But, alas! the horses already upset by the singing and the flutterings of oriflammes, catching sight of a great black creature with her veil blowing about before their eyes, immediately and abruptly shied. The Capuchin lost his footing and fell back with all his weight in the arms of his admirers, who, not being equal to quite such a load, fell with him. The driver rapidly wheeled the animals in, and the three endeavored to rise—a proceeding which would have been simple enough but for an unforeseen

development of Lisette's hysterical tendencies. Clutching at the monk's gown, she held it wildly in her grasp, shrieking out, "Don't leave me! don't leave me!"

The poor old lady, who was underneath the monk, struggled in vain to rid herself of the stifling incubus. The scene became so ludicrous that the others, who had been terrified at first, finding that, after all, no farther calamity was in prospect, save only the loss of the good mother's cap, which had fallen from her head, making terrible exposure of gray locks and baldness, could no longer contain their merriment. Shouts of laughter echoed on every side, the more violent from the efforts made to repress them. The postillion, who was grinning from ear to ear, came to the rescue, and helped the Capuchin once more into the carriage.

Madame de la Caprède cast round her a glance of fury, ashamed of the absurd climax which, known as it would be through the entire parish, and more especially to Julio, had crowned her impromptu display with everlasting ridicule.

So ended the lady's ovation in honor of the Capuchin. So let it end!

CHAPTER XI.

AN ECCLESIASTICAL CONFERENCE.

A WEEK after the departure of Father Basil there was an ecclesiastical conference at Luchon. The clergy of the district mustered in great force, whether from curiosity or zeal we are not prepared to say. At all events, the Capuchin's mission had made such a stir that all the priests round, buried as they were in their valleys, and hungering after news of the outside world, came eagerly to Luchon to learn from Julio himself what had occurred at St. Aventin.

These conferences have two parts—the discussion and the dinner. In the first is read a treatise, elaborately got up, on some theological question announced at the previous meeting—a kind of essay, which the orator of the day has extracted by slow degrees from his scanty presbytery library; at the second, the reverend gentleman at whose house the first is held, avails himself of the opportunity to entertain his brethren.

On the occasion at present referred to, the clerical mind was so intensely preoccupied that but a very limited attention was bestowed on the deeply interesting paper from the vicar of Casaux on major and minor probabilities, all dispute of its profound propositions being scrupulously avoided. The more impatient spirits kept whispering even the Athenian inquiry, "What news is there?" to which the others answered, "You know very well—the miracle." Many eyes were turned to Julio, who was expected to have a budget forthcoming on the great topic; and in case of his being reserved, on the vicar of Luchon, who was believed to have had the fullest possible details from the lips of Basil himself.

The sitting ended, to the great delight of the impatient majority, a most animated conversation commenced among the various groups. Some remained in the room with their host; others walked in the garden, evidently interested. The wonders of Lourdes had just been happening, and the Parisian press had taken up the subject. An episcopal manifesto was expected to decide the question, while the fanatical portion of the community, equally indifferent to the sanction of prelates or newspapers, rushed in crowds to the wonderful grotto where Bernadotte had seen a grand lady. And now the question arose whether the quiet valleys of the Haute-Garonne were not about to furnish a similar spectacle.

"It would greatly revive religion in our parishes," said the Jeannots.

"It would be a death-blow to skepticism," observed the Torquemadas.

"It would be excessively diverting," said the facetious.

The street wits of Paris are found in every part of France, and in every garb.

Other groups were enlarging on Julio.

"A talented fellow that—capital preacher."

"There must have been some reason for his being banished to St. Aventin."

"Oh, bishops are jealous of clever priests; they only like humdrums about them."

"No mistake about that. As sure as any head pops up, over it goes an extinguisher. They are so horribly afraid, in the various dioceses, of energetic and independent men leagu- ing together to effect the emancipation of the inferior clergy."

"They are of one mind on this point throughout France. It's a downright conspiracy against us."

"Wait a while, my friends; that's not the only one in store for us. They have not done reining us in yet. Their project is notorious to reduce us to the condition of a 'servum pecus' of the episcopate."

"Good heavens! what more can they do? We are that already, aren't we?"

And once started on the bishops—a fruitful topic of discussion—Julio, Father Basil, and Lisette Cabarous were all forgotten.

By others the vicar of St. Aventin was alluded to in any thing but flattering language. The vicar of Luchon, who was not by any means fond of him, had let slip a word or two of his incautious hospitality on a certain stormy night; enlightened, doubtless, on the subject by Mother Judas, through the sacristan of the vicar of Castillon, Julio's nearest neighbor, in the valley of Arboust, who had retailed his news to the cook, who had retailed hers to the principal house-keeper, who had come with a mysterious air to communicate the matter to the dean.

At length the important moment of dinner arrived. Good customs have not died out among the clergy since the days of Boileau. The Church might have been easily recognized at the well-ordered banquet prepared with great

care by the chief caterer of the household. The dean motioned to his guests to take their places.

The journey to Luchon that morning and the fresh mountain air had sharpened the general appetite. The first course disappeared under a heavy fire, in the midst of a silence broken only by the monotone of heavily worked jaws.

The corporeal appeal, so imperative, so irresistible, at length satisfied, the higher nature put in its claims, scarcely less potent over the Southern race, so notorious for their conversational powers. The moment arrived when one thought was uppermost in every breast, and one question at the tip of every tongue—

“What about the miracle of St. Aventin?”

The vicar of Luchon cast a significant glance at Julio, who, being a junior, had been banished to the bottom of the long table, with our old friend from the Valley of Lys, whose unhappy experience has already been recounted, and who carried in his face the undefinable marks of severe suffering.

Julio, who had not been appealed to directly, held his tongue. The archpriest told the story.

The occurrence had lost nothing in the narrative of Father Basil. All that a brilliant fancy could do for it had been done; the tale swelled to the proportions of a mediæval legend.

For example, Lisette Cabarous, the heroine, was of a character and disposition utterly superior to this common earth—one destined beforehand, by a mighty revelation, to be the herald of a new dogma, a glorious visionary, like Theresa or Catharine of Sienna. Mother Judas, transfigured by the enthusiastic Capuchin, had been miraculously intrusted, to her signal honor, with the guardianship of this marvelous child, destined to be the everlasting glory of the mountain. No mention was made, in the Capuchin's narrative, of any ordinary feminine commonplaces in Lisette's life. Her career was irradiated with a halo of mysterious splendor, her future mission among men was set forth as unquestionably divine.

Such is the power of the wonderful over the minds of men, that few among those present—even the most generally addicted to raillery—ventured to cherish a doubt as to the truth of what they had just heard.

It must be added, also, that in the theological training of the priesthood, whether from the fear of admitting the cold shadow of skepticism into minds reared in the dry, sere pastures of ecclesiastical establishments, or from real ignorance of the numerous phenomena attendant on natural hysteria, not a word is breathed of any possible interpretation, even of the most outrageously ridiculous vision, narrated by a nun or any other lady of an enthusiastic temperament, other than that it came either from God or the devil.

So, great was the astonishment when, after the dean had enlarged freely and mysteriously on the assumed revelation made to Lisette Cabarous, Julio, feeling compelled to state what he had seen and heard, in the face of such a

wrought-up tale, played before the sacred audience the part of “devil's advocate.”

“I do not deny,” he said, “that God can make communications to men; not to mention the cases of those who have been conspicuous for peculiar sanctity, with whose history we are all familiar, and whom the Church honors. We know that he can make his voice heard in the conscience as in the depths of a sanctuary, where He may wish to write the healthful lessons of repentance. But in this way each of us would be able to speak of revelations, whose history, if recorded, would have too much sameness and too little importance to be of any general use. There remain, therefore, extraordinary manifestations, stamped with the mark of pre-eminence, and incapable of being confounded with this permanent intercourse between God and the soul, even in the lowest conditions of life.

“You know that theology establishes certain wise rules on this point. Miracles, to be accepted as such, must be proved to have been required—to be worthy of God—to have been verified by proofs and surrounded by illustrative circumstances, such as no reasonable person can possibly dispute.

“Now, if I examine the vision of Lisette Cabarous by these tests, frankly, I find nothing in it at all satisfying them, nothing to warrant my excepting it from the long list of common dreams and reveries, the results of sitting up all night, protracted vigils, exhausting fits, and want of dinner.”

Julio then gave an analysis of the girl's early history and constitutional temperament, the attacks she had had, the remedies which the doctor had prescribed, the effects produced upon her invariably by an undue amount of devotional exercises. He exposed the intimate relation between the brain and the imagination, the terrible reaction of the one upon the other, the endless phenomena which, as soon as the equilibrium of these two is disturbed, have had fearful issue in insanity—that scourge of the human race.

He mentioned the influence which Madame de la Caprède had exercised upon her, the effect of Father Basil's sermons on St. Joseph, the continual reading of books on the worship due to him, and the presence in her oratory of a large image of him.

He finished by quoting a series of other instances, of visions perfectly independent of all religious action, and did not hesitate to say that the undoubted fact of Lisette's being strictly truthful did not, under the circumstances, at all remove her adventure from the category of illusions of every-day common occurrence.

Julio had that common characteristic of straightforward people—he took no pains to avoid those frequent indiscretions in the handling of a subject which lead the way of themselves to violent contradiction. He had been talking Hebrew to his reverend brethren. With the exception of the vicar of Lys, whose gener-

al knowledge was infinitely more in advance than that of the others, and who only once or twice suffered a smile to steal upon his lips during the discussion, the entire body, like a pack of jurors, frozen up either in the convictions arising from their ignorance or their sensitive regard for the faith, had prejudged the question they came to hear.

Though Julio had not once addressed the archpriest, nor reflected by a single word either on him or the Capuchin, yet his statement was a formal contradiction of the dean's—an indirect attack on his credulity and that of the monk. Naturally irritable and sensitive from a conceited idea of what was due to his position, that official was mortally offended by Julio's remarks.

The eyes of the bony, hard-set little man shot out a terrible glare.

"You are very forward, sir, for a young priest. Your opinions in themselves are a matter of no moment; but here, in my house, at my table, and after what I have said, they might have been less sarcastic."

Julio saw at once the disastrous effect produced by his too undisguised remarks. He tried to remedy the mischief, and made it worse, as they generally do whose intention is excellent, and who have a special dread of creating any unpleasant feelings.

"I had not the least desire to annoy you, M. le Curé."

"Nothing more is necessary, sir," replied the dean, bringing his fist down upon the table with a bang, "to prove that you are not disposed to treat me with the respect due to my standing."

And, whether from wounded self-love, or the unhappy excitement produced by copious draughts of wine, he had considerable difficulty in avoiding such language as would have left Julio no alternative but to make his bow and take his final departure.

In fact, the young priest was on the point of rising for that purpose. But so gentle was he and so forgiving, that he pitied the old man's outburst, shrank from an unpleasant scene, and held his tongue, without suffering his countenance in the least degree to indicate his annoyance.

A little quieted by such unlooked-for forbearance, the dean recapitulated, in part, what he had already said. He insisted much on those miracles whose reality had been proved by investigation, as proving the truth of the thing revealed, inasmuch as God, he argued, never employed a miracle to establish an error.

All present went with him. Once master of the situation, he softened down, became gracious and agreeable again, and took part in the general conversation.

Jokes ran high, and laughter not always most refined; then, after a brief interval, politics came up.

There are few such meetings without discussion of the questions of the day. In France there is scarcely a single individual, from the

advocate or the commercial gentleman to the peasant who reads as he runs extracts from the *Moniteur*, pasted on the entrance of the village "mairie," but thinks he would make a thorough statesman. Priests are no more exempt from this delusion than common mortals, and, in consequence, they speculate on the most intricate European questions without troubling themselves to study them.

Naturally, on the present occasion, the clergy could not fail to be interested in following the phases of the Italian Revolution, involving no less an interest than the future of the papacy. Moreover, the general excitement on the question was unexampled. Confusing temporal and spiritual power, the disputants naturally confused ideas. For three years, at least, statesmen and diplomatists had seen in Pius IX. rather the sovereign of a small realm than the successor of Gregory VII., and, in their judgment, a power so fatally stationary in the midst of general progress was an anomaly—more than that, a danger to Europe.

Of course, the title of head of the Catholic Church had procured for its wearer a certain allowance of respect; at the same time, however, reformed counsels were sufficiently in the ascendant to convince him that there would come a day when, by the removal of the strong hand that had hitherto upheld it, and had at length become wearied of a useless support, the temporal power would fall to the ground.

But, while statesmen were regarding the Roman question from a double point of view—the religious and political—and distinguishing accurately between the temporal and spiritual sway, the clergy—benighted children of the Middle Ages—were doggedly convinced that there was no possible method of separating the two. Papal infallibility once admitted, the only course left them was to follow the chief in his fatal path. On the 17th of June, 1859, the Pope, in an address to the cardinals on the anniversary of his election, had spoken of his bitter grief at the course events were taking, and exclaimed, with more, vehemence than charity,

"Woe to those who have brought about this crisis! May the direst excommunication of the Church, the bitterest curses of Heaven, descend on their heads!"

The day after, a day fatal to the papacy, Pius issued an encyclical letter to all the bishops, declaring "that the temporal sovereignty which the enemies of the Church were seeking to wrest from him was essential to that sacred authority which he held, if he was to exercise, without let or hinderance, his holy power for the advancement of true religion."

The ultramontanes triumphed over this manifesto. "It is essential," they said, dwelling especially on that sentence. "Rome has settled it. 'Causa finita est.'"

In vain did honest Catholics come with history in their hand to combat the position, and prove the mischief that had resulted from the

temporal power. They were met with cries of "Blasphemy! heresy!"

Few voices, indeed, were heard among the clergy. The prudent section was in the majority. "What is the good of battling over ruins?" they asked. "The question of papal royalty is doomed; why be in at the death? Why break the heart of an old man? Let him alone. Leave him in peace. More graceful far to bow before fallen majesty than to help to strike it down."

Yet this neutrality was very unsound. Had the bishops and priests who foresaw that the Pope would forfeit, by his obstinate refusal of all reforms, not only his triple crown, but also his temporal power, raised their voice from the first in open, manly protest, such a declaration of their sentiments would have been an efficient counterpoise to the flattery of the other party. But it can not be denied that moral courage is rare among the clergy. Passive obedience—their system from first to last—is dead against it. The young priest, placed in a parish under the thumb of his infallible bishop, feels his independence as a man gradually oozing out at his fingers' ends. By degrees he is afraid to think for himself, much more to speak. Haply at some future day he may recover a modicum of independence as vicar-canon or vicar-general, but never to a thorough extent. Bigots alone speak out in the Church. Agents of the religious societies, more especially of the Jesuits, they create and propagate those ideas which tend to the re-establishment of mediæval despotism in the Church of the nineteenth century.

This faction had materially advanced the cause of Napoleon III., under the impression that his sovereignty would be available for the compulsory execution of all their projects. Their official organ, the *Univers*, offered him an army of 40,000 priests and 40,000 monks.

The famous publications, however, *Napoleon III. and Italy, The Pope and the Congress*, together with the Emperor's reply to the Archbishop of Bordeaux and his letter to the Pope, had thrown them into the utmost consternation. The savior of the Church, they said, had become her persecutor. No account was made of his past and intended efforts to prevent a crash. The pastorals of the ultramontane bishops teemed with the most irritating language. At length, on March 29th, 1860, the Pope excommunicated the invaders of the States of the Church, while in the following May, Umbria and the Marches were occupied by Piedmont.

This was the subject of discussion at the dean's table. The emperor was roundly blamed for all that had happened.

"I have always maintained," said one, "that the author of the letter to Edgar Ney would do us an ill turn. You, gentlemen, have resolved to see only the bright side of every thing. Your dreams will be rudely dispelled before long."

"It's a dreadful business," said the dean.

"There's nothing to fear," said the vicar of B—. "The first empire was mad enough to

attack the papacy, and perished in consequence. We are stronger than they think. If the Pope only stands firm, he will thrust back revolution and emperor alike."

"As for me," said an Optimist, "I am full of confidence in the future. The emperor has sent General Lamoricière to the Pope, and that's a good sign."

Julio listened to the conversation in silence.

"You are not speaking, M. l'Abbé Julio. What was the late cardinal's opinion on the Italian crisis? Surely he must have told you in private?"

"The cardinal was very reserved on the subject," answered Julio. "He thought, however, that the author of the letter to Edgar Ney, with all that tenacity of purpose and constitutional perseverance—in the event of his arriving at unlimited power and the guidance of the affairs of Europe—would most unquestionably realize at Rome, sooner or later, the programme that letter set forth."

"Then it is all over with the temporal power."

"It might last a little time longer, if it accepted certain imposed conditions."

"Which would be out of the question."

"Then it would have to give way. It is the only instance left in Europe of those ecclesiastical monarchies which were founded under the feudal system. All the rest have fallen before secular influences, and this will be swept away by the Italian revolution."

"Then do you mean to say you think that revolution will succeed?"

"So far as I can judge, most certainly. The cardinal, who had been in Italy a year before his death, never doubted that that would be the issue. He used to say that the priestly government was detested at Rome, and that the cardinals, and those about the papal court, openly acknowledged that if the French army quitted the Castle of St. Angelo, the Pope would have to run the next day. You will allow that when that is the impression on the spot, the only question left is one of time."

"Never mind, we must hold fast."

"Yes," answered Julio, "hold fast, certainly, in defiance of any outside power, were there holding-ground; but the Roman population has an intense horror of the papacy. Moreover, in a region where every thing is artificial; where prelacy, a special caste, is the sole governing influence; where the rest of the nation, like an imprisoned herd, has no voice at all in the direction of affairs, there is no reliable ground on which to oppose the fate that will carry off this worn-out system."

"Then what would you have the Pope do?"

"Do? Nothing! In this tremendous movement his action would be idle. At one time he might have played an arduous but a glorious part by heading and controlling the mighty movement. But the time has passed for that. He either did not see such a course before him, or, seeing it, dared not attempt it."

"A sweet idea that of yours! The Pope a revolutionist!"

"Sweet or the reverse, it would have been salvation to his civil power."

"May I ask whether you consider that power necessary to support the spiritual?"

"The sentiment you phrase into a question is, I know, dangerous ground; still, I can't say that I think much of it. When this power has passed away, and the Church, with the right arm of the spiritual, applied herself, as in the old days, when she knew nothing of a triple crown, to the discharge of her lofty function, who will presume to take God to task for permitting the mutilation? Let us leave the issue in his hands."

"Horrid creature, that Abbé Julio," said two priests to one another in strictest confidence.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INQUIRY.

It was Thursday, two P.M., the archbishop's hour for holding his council. The various members of the board were assembling, almost at the same minute, with wonted punctuality. Archbishop Le Cricq was in his business-room, where he held his conferences. He was reading a letter of great personal interest to himself. Let us look over his shoulder.

"Paris, June 15th, 1860.

"DEAR ARCHBISHOP,—You must think, after my long silence, that I have neglected your interests. This, however, is not the case, as I often think of you; but at court it is necessary to choose suitable moments for asking a favor, and these are comparatively rare.

"On the present occasion, I am happy to be the bearer of good news. I have had a private interview with the Minister of Religion, whom I have succeeded in entirely enlisting on your side, so that there is no farther opposition to be apprehended in that quarter.

"A certain august personage, with whom I have had the honor of a brief conversation, appeared to be very warmly disposed to you. She was good enough to answer me that she would do all in her power to help you to the cardinal's hat.

"So every thing is tending in the direction of that object which is, I can assure you, my dear archbishop, one of deep interest to myself.

"I gathered from the Minister of Religion, who has a list of the prelates, with particulars respecting them, that in the secret reports on your administration you are commended highly for your admirable deportment toward the provincial government representatives. You are highly spoken of, and your rule is described as free from annoyances and interference. There is, however, one rather serious charge against you in the prefect's report: you are represented as having been rather hard upon a clever young

priest accused of certain irregularities of teaching. This sort of thing has a bad effect here, the government having its own reasons for not offending the inferior clergy.

"I tell you this in strictest confidence. Agitate in your own interests at Rome, and I doubt not that you will soon succeed.

"It will be among the pleasantest memories of my life, dear archbishop, should I be able to contribute, however humbly, to the advancement of a prelate so illustrious for his moral and intellectual worth. Pray believe, etc.,

"GENERAL P——, Senator."

The vicars-general, the superior of the seminary, and the canons who formed the archiepiscopal council, having assembled, they proceeded to discuss the business of the day. Various questions having been settled, the vicar-general-in-chief read Father Basil's report of the vision of Lisette Cabarous. Canon L——, a credulous divine, the great friend of the La Salette affair at T——, almost leapt from his seat in ecstasy on hearing the news. He was on the point of winding up with a *Nunc dimittis*, after assuring the archbishop that he thanked God for having vouchsafed so signal a favor to the diocese of T——, under the rule of his highness; when the superior of the seminary, a grave and thoughtful man, and little inclined to credit new dogmas and excesses, took up the matter, throwing considerable doubt on the question of the apparition. To which Canon L—— replied that those objections had already been urged in the cases of Salette and Lourdes, and that, for all that, the unanimous judgment of the clergy and the Catholic world favored those visions.

The vicar-general urged the, to him, important consideration that, assuming certain doubts as to the authenticity of the revelation, it was still calculated to edify the people, to revive the worship of St. Joseph, and so to extend the cause of true religion.

"We must work on the masses," he argued; "and since skepticism is pushing its way on all sides, *per fas et nefas*, to extinguish the faith, we may, without scruple, refer to revelations more or less certain to prove to the people that the Catholic religion is ever ready to support itself in their presence by miraculous aid."

The upshot of his advice was that the archbishop should take the matter into his consideration, and, after having made farther inquiries respecting it, declare his judgment.

Monseigneur spoke last. In his judgment, there was quite enough of this kind of thing abroad already in France and Italy. He had no fancy for bringing public opinion to bear upon himself, or, in the well-known disposition of the public press, to brave the ridicule of the newspapers. So he declared formally, to the consternation of poor Canon L——, that he should let the matter drop, leaving individual Catholics to please themselves as to whether they believed or disbelieved it.

"Only," he added, addressing himself to the vicar-general, "write to the vicar of the parish, informing him that as I wish the thing to be suppressed, he is to take no notice of it in the church, or by any processions or observances."

"I fancy that would be an unnecessary prohibition, monseigneur. M. l'Abbé Julio, if Father Basil is to be believed, would be only too glad to preach against it."

"Then tell him he's not to do that either."

"But that's not all, monseigneur. A charge has been brought against him by a female of very high repute. Here is Father Basil's report on the matter."

"More complaints," said the archbishop; "they come every day, especially from pious ladies. They are always smelling out misdemeanors, and they are not over difficult about the proofs. They would think nothing of accusing their vicar of having carried off the church bell in his pocket."

"This accusation, however, monseigneur, is very serious; the facts are indisputable. Probably he will not deny them himself."

And the Abbé Gaguel read the account, with which the reader is already acquainted.

"Such scandals, monseigneur," he observed, "must not be tolerated, however lenient your highness may be disposed to be. I propose an inquiry."

Which was the unanimous vote of the council.

The archbishop was evidently annoyed.

"These young priests," he said, "are constantly committing some imprudence or other. Possibly some one who had lost her way, or a chance pilgrim—who knows?—had stopped at the presbytery; or some poor creature called to ask help from a man generally reputed to be rich, and the silly young fellow gave her shelter. He is capable of any extent of folly, but not of immorality. An inquiry is always attended with inconveniences; if the charge is false, still the impression produced by the investigation clings to the public mind, and is in a measure injurious to the innocent person. Even if it be true, we have no proof on the matter, and we shall be looked upon as persecuting this young priest. I am in a very delicate position; I think we might let the thing remain as it is."

"Impossible, monseigneur," said the vicar-general. "You know the rules of our administration. We can easily have an inquiry without much stir. The vicar of Luchon is a prudent old man, who has discharged such a task more than once already with admirable discretion. If your highness thinks fit, I will send him to St. Aventin on an assumed visit. He can then cross-examine the accused, and your highness will be able to judge whether it is expedient to proceed any farther in the matter."

The archbishop saw there was nothing for it but to give in, so the inquiry was ordered.

The same evening, Father Basil made a special visit to the vicar-general, being full of anx-

iety to know about the vision. Of course he was greatly mortified at hearing how coolly the archbishop took it; but the notion of the inquiry consoled him, as his hatred for Julio was stronger than his monkish superstition. The vicar-general told him of the order, in confidence; in similar confidence, the Capuchin revealed it to his friends; they, in their turn, extended their information to other friends and other monks as a profound secret; and so, before a week, all the clergy of the diocese knew, in strictest secrecy, that an inquiry was out against Julio.

The vicar-general's letter on the subject reached Luchon the same day. The dean was only too ready to act against Julio, whom he had detested from the day of the dinner at his house. He prepared to set out the next day, and on the following morning, at about nine o'clock, alighted at the presbytery of St. Aventin.

He was welcomed by Julio with the utmost composure and courtesy.

"M. le Curé, I am greatly honored by your visit. You have started from Luchon at a sufficiently early hour to enable me to offer you some breakfast."

"I have breakfasted already, sir, thank you. I come here on business, and in the archbishop's name."

"May I ask you to enlighten me, then? I am all attention."

Then, with all the gravity of a judge with a prisoner at the bar, the dean produced a pen and writing-case, and arranged himself for taking down Julio's answers to the questions he was about to put. The examination was very long. The cunning old man combined Pyrenean loquacity with Gascon craft. He attacked Julio on all sides; tried to involve him in contradictions; employed at one time severity to intimidate, at another gentleness to allure; and made many a promise of archiepiscopal clemency. To whatever he urged, however, he could get but one answer.

"A very young girl, a stranger, utterly unknown to me, was found by me, one night, in my church, bathed in tears, when I went to close the door, and was afterward received into the presbytery. She was scarcely with me a moment in the church, when she related to me her troubles, which I can not divulge, and which would in no way affect your inquiry. Subsequently, in the presbytery, she had one to take care of her, fully qualified for the task, who had come to join her that night, and left me, as she did, the next morning. That's the whole truth of the story; more I can not tell you without violating confidence."

"But you must see that such a course as you are taking would frustrate any inquiry. Why will you not point out to us this exculpatory evidence? Her deposition, if it satisfied us, would remove all doubts."

"Because I can not."

"That looks very much like a story framed for the occasion."

"As you please. I acknowledge that, judg-

ing by appearances, I have been imprudent. I had to choose between a stern duty and a hospitality compromising my reputation."

"You were very wrong."

"I do not think so; and, whatever may be the consequences of my act, my conscience is perfectly quiet in reference to it, and I am very thankful that I did it."

"He is a clever fellow this," thought the sly old man; "he knows how to defend himself. I have conducted many an inquiry, but hitherto the poor wretches have always blushed and stutted; and when I said to them, 'It is useless to attempt to deceive me,' they have fallen on their knees, weeping; but this priest here is as calm as he can be."

However, he resumed:

"Come, sir, we must settle this matter. You may rest assured that a man of my age is not to be humbugged." And, so saying, he darted keen looks at Julio, who contented himself by saying,

"I have nothing farther to add, sir. You are judge in your opinion; I am judge in the matter of the respect I owe to myself."

And with this he rose, as much as to say, "That will do; you may go."

"Well," said the dean to himself, "I suppose I must close my examination. There is no evidence against him; he can take good care of himself."

"Will you sign my report?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Dean."

And, this done, the old man was escorted to his carriage by Julio with every mark of conventional respect.

On his way he thought over the whole affair; read and re-read his manuscript; recalled Julio's manner, gentle, calm, and submissive, and asked himself if it suited a guilty man. Yet he was unwilling to believe him innocent.

"However," he muttered, "if the suspicion is false, he will know that I have only done my duty; if it is true, he will see that I am not to be trifled with."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PASTORAL VISIT.

THE most illustrious and most reverend Le Cricq, Archbishop of T——, but not yet cardinal of the Roman Church, though coveting eagerly that exalted dignity—which would give him, in the *first* place, an income of thirty thousand livres; *secondly*, would make him a senator, with the modest addition of another thirty thousand; *thirdly*, would place on his head a great red hat, and on his shoulders the purple robe of a Roman senator, conferring the right of aiding in the election of popes, with the chance (more valuable than ever in the vicissitudes of a revolutionary period) of being elected Pope himself—made a tour through his extensive diocese, visiting parish after parish.

He had not, like one of his predecessors, the

Cardinal of C——, four splendid horses harnessed to his carriage, and numerous liveried lackeys. Le Cricq, like the majority of his brother bishops, was not of noble family, but of very humble origin. His mother had been a mender of old chairs in her day—an occupation, however, which had not hindered her from being an excellent woman, who had brought up her family with great care, and had aspired to the honor of enrolling her eldest son in the priesthood. She was still alive, and, notwithstanding her somewhat unpolished manners, held her own right worthily in the palace of monseigneur, her son. The archbishop had adopted a more aspiring heraldic motto than the "*Etiam si omnes: ego non.*" His shield exhibited a ducal crown, with a rook, argent, on a field, sable; the device being "*Ardua vincam,*" which, being interpreted, signified, "I mean to be a cardinal."

The time was the middle of June. Numerous visitors were storming the various watering-places from Biarritz to Luchon. Bathers and excursionists of every class and both sexes, including gentlemen and ladies in search of materials for book-making, abounded on all sides. Mineralogists, entomologists, botanists, swarmed in the mountain paths, climbed the peaks, and startled the wild goats in the most out-of-the-way crannies of the Pyrenees. The "*Pic du Midi*" itself beheld the crowded approach of its annual caravanserai. Multitudinous tourists made nothing of a four hours' climb—after a night spent on a couch a trifle harder than any the most uncivilized inns could have afforded them—up the acclivities of the Peak, stretching like a huge barrier between the southern sun of Spain, and the cool, pleasant valleys on the other side.

Luchon especially was gorged with the human influx. Never had the stately promenades, under trees centuries old, beheld such a concourse of fashion, such an assembly of guests mad after mountains, expeditions, merry parties to the Lac d'Oo, Venasque, Upper Bagnères, and the Spanish valley, wherein nestled peaceably the Lilliputian republic of Andorre.

The arrival of the archbishop in the valley occasioned fresh excitement. The mountaineers were pleased at the honor. Down they came from the heights, leaving their flocks, and arraying themselves for the occasion in holiday garb.

The churches were too small to hold the masses swelling out, like billows of the sea, from every side. The archbishop was obliged to confirm in the open air. His journey was all but a continual ovation. Triumphant arches of foliage and flowers adorned the entrance of each village. Choirs of young girls, in white dresses, thundering artillery salutes from the peasant lads, not to mention the addresses of the various municipalities, invested this pastoral visit with the character of a perpetual fête.

The most illustrious was in the third heaven. His vicar-general took good care to send, every three or four days, to the T—— newspaper and

the *Catholic Atlas* a detailed account of the proceedings. Attention would certainly be drawn to the columns. The cardinal's hat was in the wind, and no mistake.

The archiepiscopal addresses were not of the most astounding character. They formed the only ordinary element in the pageant. The worthy prelate had got hold of a stereotyped phrase, and, in imitation of the famous sentence of Louis Philippe, "It is ever with fresh gratification," he conducted that part of his proceedings. "Your archbishop brings you his blessing," etc., etc. Happily the speech was brief, the only merit in monseigneur's eloquence.

The mountain curés, posted at the entrance of their villages, cross and holy-water sprinkler in hand, paid their respect to their lord. Such was their regulated task from generations back.

One might have hazarded the conjecture that they had stolen from each other the sparkling utterance, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

The last valley visited at the beginning of July was that of Arboust. The night before the archbishop had been to Lys, the vicar of which place had not put himself much out in the matter of due reception. A solitary rope, twined with a few ivy leaves, enwreathed with moss, did duty as a triumphal arch. The vicar had not prepared a meal for monseigneur, who was consequently obliged to return to Luchon to dinner. Monseigneur Le Cricq had made no secret of his disgust; the unfortunate priest, indeed, ran a good chance of paying dear for his want of tact. The archbishop, on visiting the church in company with the officials belonging to it, was unusually stern. "What is the meaning of those spiders' webs there, in that corner? this linen is very dirty; that altar furniture is in tatters; the chalice is rusty."

While the reprimand was being administered, the vicar, very red in the face, gulped down his wrath without adventuring a remark.

The same evening, however, the archbishop, on his return to Luchon, returned to the subject of his recent dissatisfaction, and inveighed bitterly against the state of things at Lys.

"Oh, those independent gentlemen pay no court to their bishops," said the vicar-general, with a sneer.

"Did you see that rope covered with moss?"

"Beautiful, wasn't it?"

"Poor fellow. Probably his thoughts were running on quite another topic. They say he is violently in love with the daughter of the mayor of his village. Before long there will be a scandal there."

"I've a good mind to pack him off to the other end of the diocese."

"Heighho! Send him where you will, he will get into scrapes. However, you may as well try the experiment, monseigneur."

And so the matter was settled.

"Where do we go to-morrow? Let me look at the plan of our journey."

"To St. Aventin, monseigneur."

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"Ah! to the Abbé Julio?"

"Exactly; another of the independent set."

"We've never met him with his brethren. He was neither at Luchon, nor at St. Mamet, nor in any of the neighboring parishes."

"I noticed his absence myself. He hasn't asked me to dinner."

"Very well, monseigneur; then we can come back and dine here."

"Quite so. What is the time fixed for being there?"

"Nine A.M."

"All right; order the horses early. We shall catch the fresh mountain breeze."

The next morning, before half past eight, the little bell of St. Aventin summoned the population of the valley of Arboust to the church. The snow had entirely disappeared from the parts sheltered by the mountain, and there were no glaciers left except in the centre of the chain, and there only at a great elevation. The weather was glorious. The torrent, falling from rock to rock, thundered back its mighty utterance from the depths of the ravine, in mock reply to the strange innovating sounds, like electric peals reverberating in the distance.

Some shreds of snow-wraith hung on the scarped edges of the mountains like aerial draperies which a breath of wind might carry off. A little way off, dark green forests, stately and solemn, stretching up to the verge of those awful heights where vegetation ends, spread out a landscape of depth and darkness where the gaze was lost, and clothed the vast canvas of nature's painting with that air of savage grandeur which human pencil has never adequately depicted in all its ineffable mysteries. High above the scene uprose the rugged peaks, bare in their most precipitous ascents, and tinged with ashy white where the glaciers reached—those inexhaustible reservoirs of clear laughing water, ever flinging itself from the distant summits in glittering cascades.

Such was the spectacle that was presented. The prelate, irritated though he had been from the previous night, could not but calm down in the presence of so gentle and majestic a vision. As he recited his breviary on the way, his thoughts wandered greatly. The commonest minds, accustomed as a rule to the excitements of active life, are awed involuntarily by the mighty influences of Nature's grandeur. A power from on high exercises over them a subtle and irresistible influence to which they are compelled to bow, all conscious of defeat.

The archbishop's countenance was almost amiable when he reached the rustic chapel of St. Aventin. He was too anxious to please to omit rendering homage to the accredited saints of the places he visited. So he stopped his carriage, and, having ascertained how far it was to the presbytery, ordered his coachman to go on before, while, in the presence of a large group of the country people, he announced his intention of making the pilgrimage to St. Aventin on foot. Loud cries of "Vive monseigneur!"

greeted the gracious communication from every side.

"Why isn't the vicar here?" he asked. "If he knew what was proper, he would be well aware that a bishop ought to commence his entry into St. Aventin by visiting the lowly shrine dedicated to the saint of the parish, and celebrated so justly in pilgrim annals."

"Probably he is awaiting your highness at the entrance of the village," said the vicar-general.

Meanwhile, the mountaineers, who had arrived from every direction at the first peals from the church turret, crowded along the road and formed an escort. Thus attended, the archbishop reached the village, where the mayor, surrounded by his officials, waited to greet him. His address, on this occasion, contrasted forcibly and most favorably with his usual literary talent. In point of fact, it was Julio who had endeavored to introduce into the municipal speech a garniture of grace and refinement. The orator had been conning his task a week before, and, delighted with his success in getting it up, had told Julio that he was thoroughly at home with his lesson, and, were it necessary, could repeat it by heart, to which he received answer, "Not on any account, don't attempt such a thing; much better read it."

The archbishop, in his turn, extracted from his pocket, where he had in reserve eight or ten specimens of the article, what seemed to him, with a slight variation, best adapted for the occasion, and duly delivered it.

Then, turning into the main street, past the chief houses lining the terrace on the high road to the "Lac d'Oo," he calculated on finding at least two or three triumphal arches, those stereotyped exhibitions of official enthusiasm in such places. Above all, he expected to meet the vicar, surrounded by the faithful, with cross and banner, prepared to receive him in procession; when suddenly he came upon the church—an old Roman edifice of great architectural interest—but no curé, no procession, no triumphal arches, no festoons of flowers across the streets. A tightly packed crowd awaited him at the entrance. The building was already crammed, and Julio, who had confined himself within the strictest regulations of the ceremonial, waited in the interior, robed in his surplice, to offer the holy water and present the cross.

The prelate was evidently annoyed as he ascended the entrance steps, though he made a decided effort to conceal his vexation. He advanced with a face red with emotion, his eyes straight before him, his head thrown back haughtily, and took the holy water from Julio's hands with evident asperity.

Then he appeared to wait for a complimentary address from the curé, but was rewarded for his patience with a simple, though reverent inclination of the head, and Julio, turning round to the altar, paused quietly and modestly for the archbishop to go forward. Monseigneur was compelled to follow the cross which was carried

before him by one of the choir, and to take his place at the prie-Dieu which had been prepared for him.

A large number of young people had been arranged for confirmation. They formed four closely packed rows from the door to the iron railing across the choir, and the quiet peacefulness in their attitude and appearance proved what care had been bestowed upon them. A little farther back, within the sanctuary, were some old people who had not yet received the rite.

The archbishop, arrayed in his pontifical vestments, celebrated mass. Then he mounted the pulpit, his mitre on his head and his crosier in his hand, accompanied by the vicar-general, who stood on the steps. He was not happy in his address; his previous annoyance, together with that painful impression which even the most exalted dignitaries can be conscious of, in speaking in the presence of one like Julio, reputed as an orator, exercised a painful influence on his never over-fluent periods. He floundered about in sorrowful helplessness, and, becoming conscious of the fact, hastened to wind up in true orthodox style, by promising heaven to the good, and threatening hell to the bad.

Had any one watched Julio narrowly, they might have detected a very subtle smile playing for a moment on his lips. Slight as it was, however, the archbishop observed it, and inferred that the vicar of St. Aventin regarded his address as decidedly below par. He quitted the pulpit mortified and humiliated.

When great people are out of sorts with themselves, they take vengeance on little people. So, when Monseigneur Le Cricq entered the presbytery, he hardly deigned to notice Julio's respectful greetings, telling his vicar-general aloud that he meant to set out at once for Luchon, and that the horses were to be ordered without delay.

"I will inspect the church and presbytery," he added, "and then go."

"But, monseigneur, refreshments are ready for your highness."

Indeed, Martha had carefully prepared a choice and elegant breakfast in the dining-room.

"As you did not invite me," he replied, "I concluded that you did not meditate entertaining your archbishop, so I accepted an engagement at Luchon."

"I am extremely sorry, monseigneur. A bishop is asked as a matter of course to the table of his clergy, however humble. May I offer your highness some soup?"

"Nothing at all. Let us go to the church."

During his hurried inspection of the various articles employed in divine service, such as the baptismal font, sacristy furniture, the tabernacle, and holy vessels, the archbishop seemed very much vexed that there was nothing to find fault with. Every thing was in the most perfect order. Pointing to the iron rail, he said,

"I trust, Monsieur le Curé, that you will not permit this choice work of art to be ex-

changed for a wretched marble slab, as I find it so constantly the case."

"The vestry are the guardians of the fabric, monseigneur. I will communicate to them the orders of your highness."

"Very good. Now for the presbytery."

When they had entered the study, with its rich library and scientific collection, the archbishop opened fire—

"A word with you, Monsieur le Curé."

"I am at your service, monseigneur."

"First of all, let me tell you how surprised I was not to have been met by you in procession."

"Monseigneur, I followed the orders laid down; I stood at the church door to offer you the holy water."

"I understand you—you were determined not to exceed, one atom, the limit of compulsory respect toward me."

"Monseigneur, instead of a procession of rustics marshaled to the following of cross and banner, I presented to you, in the interior of the church, a goodly number of young people, whom I had endeavored to keep away from all excitement calculated to dissipate the solemnity of their thoughts. I thought that in that way I was best fulfilling my duty as their pastor. I am very sorry that you misinterpreted my motives."

"Well, let that pass; but why have you studiously avoided erecting triumphal arches?"

"I assure you, monseigneur, I never gave them a thought; nor did I suppose that your highness would set any store by them."

"Then, again, why have you not paid me the ordinary respect of having a throne prepared in the sanctuary? The ritual is strict, at all events, upon that point."

"A throne! monseigneur? Why, I selected the handsomest chair I had, and put it in front of the prie-Dieu for your highness's accommodation. Surely a throne is only a seat."

"You need not tell me that. But a bishop's throne, when he visits a parish, should be erected on a dais with two steps covered with carpet, and surmounted by a canopy, that he may be seen by the faithful."

"Monseigneur, I have devoted the fortnight preceding your arrival to teaching all those adults of whom a great number rarely set foot in a church. Tell me, then, monseigneur, frankly, is not that ample compensation to a bishop for the absence of a carpeted dais and canopy?"

"Well, enough of that. But I have a serious matter to talk to you about yet. The report of an inquiry forwarded to me involves you in grave suspicions. I am strongly disposed to let the affair rest; but I would warn you to be on your guard. Above all, give up writing. A priest ought not to write; he ought to occupy himself exclusively with the parish. You understand?"

At that moment, a young girl, dressed in white, with a letter in her hand, entered the

presbytery, and, asking to be permitted to see the archbishop, was introduced. The letter contained a grandiloquent request, inviting "the best of fathers" to visit the house of Madame de la Caprède, to listen to some hymns which had been prepared in his honor by the youthful female devotees of St. Avenin. It was not a petition to be discarded. The archbishop would be in his element there.

"Tell Madame de la Caprède that I accept her invitation, and will come at once."

And, taking up his gold-tasseled hat, he left the presbytery, escorted to the entrance by Julio, to whom he addressed, on parting, a dry "Good morning, Monsieur le Curé."

A large room, the usual meeting-place of Mother Judas's association, had been decorated with the utmost care. The entrance doorway was formed into a triumphal arch, under which stood madame herself, with her young people round her, each holding a chaplet of flowers.

On the arrival of the archbishop, she said,

"These are your children, monseigneur, who alone have had the honor of greeting you with a triumphal arch."

The archiepiscopal countenance beamed at this spiteful allusion. A throne had been erected on a dais at the end of the apartment, and surmounted with a canopy, as though the malignant old woman had wished to throw into greater prominence Julio's omissions. The archbishop seated himself in state. The holy assembly were arranged round the room, while a selection of girls chanted a hymn of greeting, composed by Madame de la Caprède for the great occasion, and of equal poetic skill with those previously elaborated in honor of Father Basil.

Mother Judas, who had no lack of spies, being well aware that the archbishop had declined Julio's hospitality, hastened to prepare a cup of chocolate, which Lisette Cabarous was directed to offer.

"Your highness will not refuse," she said, with a honeyed smile, chuckling over the prospect of retailing every where the precious intelligence that the archbishop, after having turned his back on Julio's offers, had accepted hers.

The great man remembered that it was getting late, and that he had a long ride in prospect before he could get to Luchon. So he took the beverage, with the addition of some slices of toast made exquisite with fresh mountain butter.

"Monseigneur, the child before you is the subject of the miracle of St. Avenin, the pride of the country round. Will you give her your benediction?"

"With all my heart, daughter."

"Speak, Lisette. Don't be afraid; his highness is kindness itself. Tell him your vision."

And the child, who was quite up in her part, enlarged as follows:

"Monseigneur, I saw St. Joseph, and he said to me, 'My child, follow me.' I rose instantly,

and found myself in the centre of a brilliant light. He added, 'Thou art in heaven, my child, and here is thy place, for having been the medium of the revelation which God has deigned to make. Here, too, is the place of the worthy archbishop, for whom is reserved the glory of making known to the Church my immaculate conception.'

The prelate, who, in all probability, did not feel quite sure that the saint had paid him such a compliment, contented himself with saying, as he rose,

"God bless you, daughter; may we meet in heaven!" And he gave his benediction to them all as they knelt before him.

His horses were waiting; his vicar-general had come to look after him. Very soon he was safe back at Luchon.

The same day, Julio, in a letter to his sister, related the events which have just been described.

"Look at these men, dearest. Look at their vulgar feelings, their narrow ideas, their utter heartlessness. Is it wonderful that the clergy should be so degraded, that they should spend their days in moral paralysis, at the mercy of an episcopal whim, ready, at any moment, to take their bread from their mouths, and abandon them, all despairing, to a make-shift life, with

all the vexations of the lowest class of social existence? Let only the day come when there shall be no appeal from these mitred proconsuls, who purchase by their servility to Rome the power of life and death over their clergy, and there will be nothing for it but a gloomy foreshadowing of the downfall of Catholicism.

"Oh, who will revive the Church? Who will infuse some sap into the old tree, worn out from root to branch? Who will disseminate some germs of that true religious life, without which whatever apes it is but a worthless outside? Who will rescue the true faith—so God-like, so immortal—from this miserable ruin, and re-establish it in the heart of a new system, where its imperishable kingdom may be again restored?

"At times, I am broken-hearted at the prospect of the future. I groan over the poor priest, the helot of the higher clergy. I groan over the bishop, with his petty spites; over the Pope, with his dreams of the glitter of a temporal sceptre. I groan over myself, too, compelled to live in the midst of these anomalies, though resolved to keep my soul unspotted from them all.

"But the day is at hand. The outwatchers are even now detecting the streaks of dawn. With them I live and hope."

PART IV.

AT LAW WITH THE JESUITS.

CHAPTER I.

A CRISIS AMONG THE CATHOLIC CLERGY.

THE archbishop's visit had left a most painful impression on Julio's mind, though he endeavored, as far as possible, to conceal the fact from his sister. In the solitude of St. Aventin, however—in the midst of a people, not one of whom could share his thoughts, imagination, that flame emitted from the brain, burned with terrible power. It was his time for earnest work, in which his intellect grasped, by close application, the triumphs of modern thought in social and philosophical science. In this laborious pursuit, embraced with delight, he found a grateful relief from the bitterness of which he had complained.

So passed many months. On one side were the wonders of nature, on the other the entrancing study of the human mind and heart. Supremely gifted in the art of arranging ideas, his powerful intellect obtained a thorough mastery in the vast fields of science and physiology. He became at once the student and the thinker.

More than a year had now passed since the occurrence of one of the greatest events recorded in history. Under the influence of skillful diplomacy, France had been induced to aid the cause of freedom in Northern Italy. Napoleon III., anxious to avoid the prescribed path which had proved fatal to Charles X. and Louis Philippe, and threatened by the popular demand for progress, had flung himself bravely into the work. For this he required, and he knew it, the highest personal energy, indomitable in the presence of opposition which would start up on all sides. The man who had risen on the ruins of a republic, and held democracy chained at his feet, was now to reverse his programme, and proclaim himself the armed dictator of a nation bent upon freedom; in fact, the emperor of a democracy, in the presence of bewildered factions, material interests compromised, and Europe in confusion. To this task he had the courage to address himself. Setting aside entreaties from those nearest to his person, the remonstrances of such of his courtiers as had got all they wanted and were unwilling to lose it, even the most sinister prophecies, he relied on his star, and set out for Italy. The horny fist of the workman of the suburb of St. Antony grasped the imperial hand in token of delight at the new idea; and the cry that greeted him in his progress was, "All we have is at your disposal; we are yours." Two months after that, Magenta and Solferino wreathed his arms with

laurel. The Austrian had been driven back behind the fortresses of Venetia. Lombardy, Tuscany, the Romagnas, and Piedmont formed a mighty empire under the sceptre of Victor Emmanuel; and the emperor, pausing only in the presence of grave complications which threatened Europe with a general war, left to time, which has ways of its own of winning victories, to carry out the remainder of the project—"Italy free from the Alps to the Adriatic."

The day after the peace of Villafranca, the conqueror devised his new scheme for giving political existence to the emancipated peninsula. It was adapted to the hereditary ideas of Italian patriots. It proposed a confederation of the Pope, the Emperor of Austria for Venetia, the King of Naples, the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, and the King of Piedmont.

This scheme, however logical at first sight, could not possibly be accepted, involving, as it did, insurmountable practical difficulties. Italian diplomatists, bent on Italian unity, would have nothing to say to it; so resolute was the opposition, that the man who was the last in the world to give up an idea he had conceived, inclined his mighty will to the mightier decree of public opinion.

The events of the year 1860 were, with Julio as with all other thoughtful men, full of matter for eager study. The sinking down of the old papal royalty was no mean event. The States were rapidly falling away. An army of occupation was necessary to its very existence. Could there be a yet greater humiliation in store?

The Italian Revolution, with all those stupendous results, provoked, of necessity, among the Catholic clergy, a feeling of bitter animosity against the victorious party, and anxiety as to the certain prospect of the banner of France floating from the Castle of St. Angelo over the shriveled empire which the Pope had abandoned. These misgivings found vent in episcopal manifestoes, the whole rancor of which was directed against "the faithless sovereign of France."

Hence the actual struggle lay between the clergy and the empire. Julio studied its phases with the patience of an anatomist, and his letters to Verdalon supplied a running comment on this intestine strife.

"To comprehend the actual crisis," he wrote, "you must observe that the system of Church government by a pope or bishops is based on the theory of pontifical royalty. Let that royalty fall, and the Pope sinks from a sovereign

into an ordinary bishop—his empire, human souls; his sword, the Gospel. Such a change at Rome would regenerate Catholicism. To the pomp of prelacy would succeed the modest life of a spiritual pastorate, essentially averse to all that the world deems great. The downfall of the temporal power would inevitably bring with it a spiritualizing of the mundane element in the Church; a subversion of the old ideas of pope, cardinals, bishops, vicars-general, arch-priests, and the entire fraternity, with all their faith in the efficacy of secular arms, Inquisition dungeons, and imperial enactments, as methods of saving the world.

"Such a reform, however, is as smoke to the eyes of the higher clergy. Never did peccant monk inveigh against his censor as they have inveighed against that detested man who had been God's glorious instrument in this magnificent reform."

Some of Julio's letters Verdalon ventured to exhibit to a few of his more intimate acquaintance, proud of his friend, and secure of sympathy where he showed them. In the prefect's report to the Minister of the Interior, Julio was flatteringly mentioned as one of the most advanced of the clergy of the diocese—a man who, so far from siding with the emperor's opponents, recognized, in the recent events in Italy, the development of a system more favorable than any other to the interests of true religion, and consequently to be regarded as a boon to the Church instead of an assault upon her interests.

On the other hand, Julio's sympathies with the onward movement rendered him more obnoxious than ever to the ill will of the Jesuits and the Ultramontane faction. Protest after protest poured in to the archbishop against the presumptuous young priest who dared to differ from the Pope, whose letters were all over the town, and who did not hesitate to array himself against the altar of God. Jesuit spies were charged to lay hold of these insidious documents, of which constant mention was made in the reports to the general at Rome, who, the more effectually to exterminate him, resolved to speak to Cardinal Antonelli on the subject.

The cardinal commended the zeal of the very reverend father, but, agreeably with the habitual reserve of the Roman court, replied that it was impossible to take any official steps in the matter with the archbishop except on written evidence.

"It is clear, your eminence, that if a party is allowed to form itself among the inferior French clergy, independent of the episcopate, which is thoroughly devoted to the cause of the temporal power, a party which groans under the episcopal yoke, and would fain be rid of it, their sentiments will most assuredly pervade France. There will be a schism among the clergy. Hot-headed men, like this wretched Julio, will become revolutionary agents, and utterly destroy the peace of the Church. Action, and severe action, is absolutely essential, your eminence."

"That's all very true, reverend father, but where are his letters?"

CHAPTER II.

DEATH OF MADAME DE LA CLAVIÈRE.

MEANWHILE another event was transpiring at La Clavière—the death of Madame de la Clavière. The last two months cunning old Tournichon had visited her for a few days in every week, in order to prevent her from making any change in her testamentary arrangements. Many a strange scene had passed between the two. Many a time the old lady, harassed by those lingering convictions which curiosity can not entirely stifle, was on the point of breaking from her bonds, summoning Julio and Louise to her side, and showing them how priestly influence had taken advantage of her weakness. But the formidable shadow of Father Briffard revived such apprehensions within her; the conviction which he had so skillfully insinuated into her mind that Louise's proper destination was a convent, where a large fortune would be worthless to her, made her so doubtful as to the course she ought to take, while the presence of Tournichon, to whom she was pledged, and who, by constantly reminding her of the disastrous course Julio was taking, had almost made her angry with "that wretched priest," as the old man called him—all these various influences combined to render her so timid that her better impulses gave way. At length her last hour came, and her latest breath passed from her with her latest risings of remorse.

Tournichon fixed her with his eyes. He never left her for a moment in her agony of mind. He took the utmost care to prevent Julio from hearing of her danger, and intercepted Louise's letters entreating him to hasten home. Julio only received the one that told him all was over, and testified at the same time his sister's surprise that he had not come before.

So he arrived at La Clavière to find Tournichon installed as master and his aunt a corpse. The Jesuit spy came and went as he pleased, gave orders and made arrangements according to his royal will. Louise and two sisters of charity were watching in the chamber of death when Julio entered and knelt by the bed.

After a moment of earnest prayer and mournful memory, he rose, and received his weeping sister in his arms, not having seen her for a long time. He then led her to the drawing-room, and attempted to soothe her grief. Seating her in a chair, he was not a little astonished to see Tournichon unceremoniously entering the room, and intruding himself on their privacy. He had always disliked the man, and felt toward him a sort of instinctive repugnance; but, as the Jesuit claimed to be a friend of his aunt's, he had admitted the plea as entitling him to regard, and invariably treated him with all proper courtesy.

Yet a look of intense displeasure crossed his countenance on the present occasion. The other understood it, and lowered his gaze demurely, assuming a serious and subdued expression, and giving the young abbé to understand that his heart was not far from breaking. There are some men who can get up affliction with such thorough neatness of rendering. Julio, however, maintained a significant silence. The in-consolable was the first to speak.

"My excellent friend, and you, my dear young lady, you have lost an admirable relative, worthy indeed to be regretted by you."

"Just so, sir," said Julio, in his most icy tone; "and therefore, under the circumstances, we should be glad to be alone; my sister needs my efforts to console her."

"Most natural; but let me remind you where the best consolation is to be found—at the foot of the Cross."

Up went the eyes, and the bosom of that meek old man heaved with a sigh of most unutterable anguish.

Julio remained standing, without offering the intruder a seat. A moment of silence ensued.

"Probably you have been surprised, M. l'Abbé, not to see the papers and doors sealed up."

"I did not notice the omission. Now that I am here, and my sister and myself are the only heirs, such a step would be needless. I am glad it was never taken, as my dear Louise's feelings have been happily spared so far. If it is to you, sir, that we owe this consideration, I thank you."

"No, it does not concern me—that is to say, it does very much—for—"

And Tournichon, in decided perplexity, stopped, and had recourse once more to a soothing sigh.

"I am at a loss to understand you, sir," said Julio.

"Providence has its designs, with which it inspires the souls of the faithful, and well does it become us to submit to them. Your aunt, my dear sir, was a saint, and nothing short of it—a thorough, downright saint."

"Quite so."

"Whose motives it would be as well to respect, even though we were unable to understand them."

"It is you I am unable to understand, M. Tournichon. Pray cut it short, and tell me what you're driving at."

"M. l'Abbé, the omission of the customary seals was by the order of your late aunt, my esteemed friend."

More sighs—they were such a comfort!—with a slight admixture of eye-wiping. But no tears happening to be on hand, he resumed, as calmly as his emotions would permit,

"That wish remains under her hand, with directions to her sole legatee to carry out all the provisions of her will."

Julio began to see his meaning now. He looked at him with a penetrating gaze.

"And that legatee, pray who may he be?"

"My esteemed friend," said Tournichon,

waiving the answer direct, "was pleased to repose the fullest confidence in me. I knew—for she confided them to me—her most intimate thoughts and distresses. You understand whence they arose, and I might tell you much of what she suffered in seeing the frustration of her dearest hopes. I do but discharge her last wishes in informing you how acutely she was hurt by the course adopted by one who owed her so much—"

"To the point, sir; fewer words, if you please. My aunt's legatee is yourself, I presume?"

"Exactly so, M. l'Abbé; her executor and the sole heir of her property."

And Tournichon, in announcing his position in the house, arrayed his exulting countenance in such an exquisite garb of compunction and humility, that, had the circumstances been less serious, Julio would have laughed outright.

As it was, he simply replied,

"If you have it in your power to prove this, sir, we shall know how to submit with becoming dignity."

"My respectable friend, M. l'Abbé, was in full possession of her faculties up to the last moment of her life. Miss Louise knows this as well as I do. And as she was justice itself, she has left you both an annuity which will be duly paid to you. A priest is a single man, and has few wants. As for the young lady, hard though this may be, her aunt thought that an heiress's position was one of great peril, and resolved to save her from it. I give you her own words: 'I should blame myself were I to leave a large fortune to Louise; her beauty and wealth would be a great snare to her. I know she will think me harsh in my conduct, but one day she will thank me for it.'"

A smile of inconceivable bitterness was on Julio's lips during this address.

"Scoundrel!" he said to Louise, in a whisper.

Then looking at the man, whom he loathed far more for his hypocrisy than for the part he had played as Jesuit jackal, he said,

"Enough, sir. As soon as my aunt is buried, we go."

"Oh, M. l'Abbé, I have no wish to be hard upon you. Miss Louise is welcome to remain as long as she pleases."

"You don't mean that. But, believe me, we should find it utterly impossible to take advantage of your kindness. At present, there's the door."

Through which Tournichon bolted somewhat expeditiously, and Julio, flinging his arms round his sister, exclaimed,

"Poor dear child, you have only me to comfort you now, but how I love you!"

And he found a painful pleasure in the thought which would thrust itself into his mind, though he repudiated it with indignation. "Louise disinherited would yet be his."

A few moments after their kind friend returned. He had a white wooden box, dark with age, and firmly secured with much string and

red wax. On it was inscribed, "Papers of the family of Julio de la Clavière."

"I am an honorable man, I assure you," he said, "and I am about to prove it to you. Here is a box of parchments and family deeds. I give you them unopened, as your aunt found them in your father's study at the time of his death. I might have kept them, for there are no instructions in the will to the effect that you were to have them. But I prefer handing them over. Believe me, sir, believe me, young lady, I am, I assure you on my word, an honorable man."

And the hypocrite drew himself up with suitable dignity on the strength of this most considerable act.

"Thank you; put it on the table," was all the answer he got.

"Of course your aunt's fortune will be devoted wholly to religious purposes. I would never have consented to enrich myself at your expense. No, sir; the entire property of La Clavière will be expended in good works. No heir of mine shall ever touch an atom of it."

"Do what you like with La Clavière, sir, though we have a pretty shrewd guess where the money is going; that is no affair of ours. Only will you have the goodness to leave us to ourselves?"

Verdelon, summoned by a note from Louise, came with all dispatch. He entered the room at the very moment that Tournichon, delighted with his own honorable conduct, was making his bow.

Louise's single utterance, "We are disinherited," came like a thunder-clap upon him.

"Disinherited!" he cried.

"Yes," said Julio; "but what matter? Our happiness did not depend on our fortune."

Verdelon prevailed upon him to tell him all that had passed with Tournichon.

"We shall see whether you are disinherited," he said, when the tale was told; "the Jesuits are at the bottom of this, clearly. Tournichon is well known as their agent. He has been nothing more than a go-between in this matter, and the law is very severe on that head. There is no doubt whatever that the Jesuits have been guilty of spoliation. Justice will favor the natural heirs. With proper proofs we are sure of our case. We must attack the will."

"My dear fellow," said Julio, "let the matter rest at present. Let us think of the last duties to be paid to my poor aunt; let us excuse her infirmities, and remember her with grateful love. Louise, this is only a debt of gratitude which we owe to our second mother."

With all due solemnity the remains were carried to the grave. Wax candles, great and numerous, with rich mortuary hangings, were produced from the treasures of the sacristy. The great silver cross and best holy-water basin were put in requisition. Choristers summoned to their aid their most superior vocal powers, and the vicar intoned the office of the dead at a con-

siderably slower rate than he would have thought desirable had it been the case of putting a pauper out of sight. There was a costly offertory and a pompous funeral oration, in which the audience were spared neither Latin quotations nor unbounded eulogies, the characteristics of that species of discourse.

The service over, Louise and Julio returned to La Clavière, the pleasant cradle of their infancy, deeply dejected at the thought of being compelled to abandon it to the spoiler.

The same evening Tournichon, who, during the ceremony, had stood by the catafalque expending an endless stock of sighs and wry faces, communicated to Madelette the legacy which her mistress had left her.

The old servant added to her other inestimable qualities that of affection for worldly goods. All her life she had cherished the hope of being rich, and pictured to herself the idea that, with her wages, which she had invested year by year with scrupulous care, added to the handsome sum which she expected at her mistress's death, she would be able to establish herself at Valcabrière in a fine tiled house, as the squireess of the village. Madame de la Clavière had told her, a hundred times, that she was down in her will; and Father Briffard, who required Madelette's influence over her mistress, had skillfully worked upon her avarice by giving her to understand that the fair portion which would accrue to her in due time would only be hers on condition that neither of the orphans effected any change in their aunt's will.

When, however, the exact amount of the modest allowance, carefully limited by the Jesuits, had been made known to her, she all but fell on the ground with dismay.

"You are not satisfied," said Tournichon, with a bantering air. "You calculated, probably, on dividing La Clavière with me?"

"Not for a moment, sir," she said, in great confusion.

"This allowance will secure you against all future want. What more do you require?" Adding, with insolent hypocrisy, "Take care, daughter, to make a good use of this money, which is a fortune for you. I would advise your retiring into a convent in the capacity of lay sister. There you will end your days in holiness and peace. You might lose your soul, you know, at any age."

"Botheration take him," she muttered to herself. "The fellow can't do without preaching."

"Don't put yourself about, sir," she said aloud. "I do not require your services as spiritual adviser. I only hope that, come the judgment day, your account may be as light as mine."

"What do you mean by your insolence?"

"Nothing, the least in the world, sir. Only I know you have not done your part for nothing in this affair; and I have a shrewd suspicion that your wages will be better than mine."

"Holy Virgin! Madelette, it's the devil that

puts such language into your lips. My good girl, your conclusions are fearfully rash. Go and confess at once. Why, do you know that you are on the point of falling into mortal sin?"

"That's right—on you go. Preach away! It doesn't alter the case, which is just this: I shall have mighty little, and you and yours will get it all. And yet without me . . ."

"I swear to you solemnly, Madelette, since you appear to know more about the matter than I thought, that I have but sought, in the whole of this transaction, to advance the glory of God; and that, so far as I myself am concerned, I have only deducted my simple expenses, incurred during so many hours in which I have had to leave my business, and by so many journeys here. These little matters settled, all the rest will go to the Jesuits."

"That's not what Father Briffard told me. He said that he had had to buy you in precious high. There, go along with you. I see it all now: I have had to work for him and you. I pulled your chestnuts out of the fire, and you only give me enough for food and clothing."

"And what more does a good Christian require in this valley of tears?"

"I may live thirty years yet; and I should not have been sorry to finish my days at Valcabrière."

"A temptation to pride, that, Madelette."

"Oh yes! And I suppose you have never had any temptation of the kind, sir—you're so very humble! Bless your heart! All the same, your goodness didn't keep you from pocketing the gold coins of the property, and leaving the poor sous to me. Now listen, since you drive me to say it: I am in a downright rage with you, and that's fact. I see I've been your dupe: you have taken advantage of my simplicity. I have been my poor mistress's jailer. How often have I stopped her complaints? how often have I lied to my own conscience to tell her that she was doing right? And something told me all the time that I was playing false. Those dear children! Oh! when I think of the poor things that I've loved so much, and now I see I have helped you to rob them, as the wolves plunder the flock in the dark corners of a wood, I'm as wretched as I can be, and that's all about it!"

"They are not so much to be pitied, after all."

"Perhaps not; if you've treated them as handsomely as you've treated me, they must be rolling in riches."

"Mademoiselle Louise has an annuity of a thousand francs."

"My! What a splendid marriage portion! About enough to marry a cobbler with!"

"Her brother has an annuity also to the same amount; and he is a worthless fellow, and a disgrace to the Church. The good fathers were too soft-hearted to leave him a beggar, as they should have done. Had they listened to me, Father Briffard would have insisted

on Madame de la Clavière's striking him out of her will altogether: he would have richly deserved it!"

"More shame on you for daring to say such wicked, false things, M. Tournichon. You make me more mad than ever. I feel the color coming up into my face. The way the poor young gentleman is treated is just disgraceful—so honorable, so pleasant, and good to every body; and such a scholar as he is! He has more learning than all your fathers put together. Get along with you, do; don't talk to me; it isn't for the like of me to argue with you. I'm only a poor peasant; but I have heard fine gentlemen, very learned, and advocates, who know all about it, say that he is the best preacher in T—. They are all jealous of him, and that's the reason why they don't like him."

"Have it so, if you choose, Madelette. You keep your opinion, and I keep mine: nor am I required to render an account to you for any thing. Meanwhile, you have notice to leave. You see I am entering on my memorandum-book that I have paid you your wages."

"I see, sir. Trust me, I shall never want any thing more from you."

"Then good-by; have your things taken away."

"Never fear, sir. Only you'll have to wait till my nephew comes from Valcabrière, with his cart, to fetch me."

"By all means: I give you to the end of the week."

"No! But that is good of you!"

CHAPTER III.

MADELETTE'S REVELATIONS.

As Julio and Louise had determined to quit La Clavière the day after the funeral, they wished to bid adieu forever to that fair abode of their youth, where they had grown up under the tender guardianship of their second mother. They thought they should like to visit all the different park-walks one after the other, and say good-by to the ivied rocks and gnarled old trees on which they had carved their initials.

Louise almost broke down at the little lake, with its gold-fish, the banks of which had been the scene of her first love-passage. Returning to the house, they visited the up-stairs corridor, where they had played in winter days; they saw their little rooms still full of those thousand nothings which, standing on chimney-pieces or attached to walls, give a room or a house all its character, but all which would have to go to the spoilers. Louise wished, indeed, to take down and carry off a few miniatures; but this Julio forbade.

"It's none of it ours," he said.

Then they went and knelt at the foot of the bed on which their aunt had died.

"Poor thing! God forgive her!"

And, crossing the great drawing-room, which

looked sombre enough through the vestibule, with its black and white marble floor, leading to the principal staircase, they sallied forth.

"Why, Julio," said Louise, suddenly stopping, "we were going without saying good-by to Madelette."

"So we were! Where is she to be found?"

And, returning by the staircase, Louise led her brother to Madelette's room. They found her busily engaged in packing, her assortment of movables being numerous and eccentric, and comprising all those various treasures that servants in large houses manage to amass after many years' service.

"Ah! my dear children," said Madelette, on seeing them come in, "you are very good to pay me a visit."

"Not at all, Madelette; it is your due—you have been most kind to us for many years."

"We have only one regret," added Louise, "that we are not able to offer to keep you. We are poor now."

These simple words produced deep remorse in the old woman's breast. And being still under the influence of her hatred for Tournichon, whom she regarded as the cause of her disappointment, she made a clean breast of it to Julio and Louise, and revealed to them all the by-paths by which the Jesuits had arrived at the coveted property.

The upshot of her information was, that she had been kept in the dark for a long time; but that, on learning from Tournichon the immense influence which she possessed over her mistress, the Jesuits deemed it absolutely essential to engage her services, promising her, at the same time, a handsome reward.

She described a scene which had taken place without Louise's knowledge just before Madame de la Clavière's death. The old lady, reproached by her conscience, had resolved to alter her will, or, at all events, to add a codicil which, while it was to leave to Julio, against whom she had begun to be prejudiced, only a small annuity, would secure to Louise a handsome marriage portion. Madelette had even been ordered to summon a notary; but, fearing to lose the proffered Jesuit bribe, had communicated the matter to Tournichon. That worthy man came at once to La Clavière, and so wrought on the mind of the poor old lady that, when the notary arrived, she simply said,

"Forgive me, sir, for having brought you here. I did wish. . . . But I see I must let things remain as they are."

And so the matter ended.

Madelette disclosed all this very much as an expiation of her dishonorable conduct in the matter. She overwhelmed Louise with caresses, and promised to visit her at St. Avenin.

Verdelon was impatiently expecting them at T—. He, as well as his friends, was a victim of the robbery. He loved Louise most ardently; but, then, a penniless bride was not to his liking. Could he marry such a one? had been his painful thought from the moment of his

first hearing the news. Verdelon was of a decisive character. He had great self-control, and could crush out any feeling of his heart rather than condemn himself to the pains of poverty.

There was an alternative left, however—to attack the will. Here was a prospect, in the first place, of honor and glory for himself, whichever way the issue was; and, next, a chance of a handsome fortune, through the marriage he desired. He counted all the chances; and, as soon as he had heard what Madelette had said, he counted on an easy victory.

In spite of Julio's natural indifference to money, he found himself involved by his friend in a war with the Jesuits. Verdelon provided the needful writs, only too glad to be engaged in a cause, the European reputation of which might be safely relied on.

He took leave of Louise, grasping her hand, and giving her a look of mingled sorrow and affection. Julio, who had noticed the warmth of the feeling, wanted to set out for St. Avenin the same day; so eager was he to get safe hold of the treasure which death had consigned to him—a treasure more precious far than all that Father Briffard had taken from him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOVERS' CORRESPONDENCE.

THREE days after their arrival at St. Avenin they received letters from Verdelon. Julio's was full of eager hopes; the young advocate had been to La Clavière, and, instead of going to the chateau, where Madelette still was, on the worst possible terms with Tournichon, who all but prevented any one from seeing her, he had stopped at the village presbytery. The vicar, who knew of the attachment between him and Louise, was a worthy old man, and full of sympathy for them. He had had the spiritual charge of Louise since she and her aunt had left T—, and had proved to be a real priest, a disinterested man, and a devoted and profitable guide.

He had sent for Madelette on the pretext of wishing to have some talk with her before she left about her kind mistress, who had left so many grateful memories in the parish. The old woman, proud and pleased, came to the house and found Verdelon there, whom she loved next to the orphans. He had contrived to get into her good books by a simple method, very successful with servants—judicious presents from time to time.

He led the conversation skillfully to the simple facts which he required absolutely to know, securing the presence of a witness in the worthy vicar. Madelette little thought meanwhile that her evidence was being acquired for judicial purposes, and taken down verbatim.

He complimented her in having put Tournichon in his place, and so effectually drew her

out, that the old housekeeper, once in the vein, detailed minutely what had been going on for the last four years, the precautions which they had adopted at first to keep her in ignorance of her mistress's struggles and misgivings, the promises Father Briffard had made her if she would only help the matter forward—money enough in this world to retire to Valcabrère, and heaven in the next; a favorite offer of spiritual fathers to their flock, as costing them nothing. The advocate then asked Madelette to keep their conversation a secret, and received a ready promise to that effect.

Verdelon then went on to say that he had seen the notary, a man of position, and much esteemed at T——; that he had assured him that his opinion on leaving the house had been, that the old lady was so besieged by Tournichon that she dared not make a will after her own mind. He had even heard her say how unfortunate and how wretched she was at a time when she was in thorough possession of her faculties.

Such were the details of Verdelon's letter. He undertook the responsibility of the entire management. There was a regular prescribed course to take, nothing more; Julio need not trouble himself at all in the matter.

Louise's epistle was shorter. It contained the customary assurances of attachment, and intimated how happy the writer would be to prove, by his energy in the lawsuit, his devotion to his beloved. He asked her to give him a full account of her journey, with a minute description of St. Aventin, its mountains, and its presbytery, to which Louise replied as follows:

"Your letter, dearest, found me very sad. You ask why so. I had been looking out for the post with feverish impatience. You call me your Louise, and surely that is enough. Yet my poor heart is assailed by a host of fears and presentiments. I can not hide any thing from you. Are these apprehensions mere idle fancies, or are they the result of a clearer apprehension of my own position and your true feeling? I can not help thinking that your letter points in the latter direction.

"Rebuke me if I am wrong. I should be only too thankful to have misrepresented you to myself. But, dear Augustus, I know you well; I can estimate your position and mine; and if this wretched lawsuit is lost, and the best fail sometimes, what prospect of happiness would remain for me?

"I dare not write more on this point, which will be, however, henceforth uppermost in my mind. I feel as though certain trouble would be easier to bear than these incessant fears; this constant questioning forever visiting and revisiting a loving woman's heart. 'Will my happiness last?'

"But understand me. All this is but an unbosoming of myself for relief, and need not at all displease you. If the worst happened, I should blame fate and not your heart. And

now that I have got rid of this unpleasant subject, I will give you some of the details you ask for.

"Our journey has been an utterly new experience, and, had it not been for my deep dejection, I should have been wild with delight at the sight of the mountains, which I had only witnessed hitherto from the bridge of the Garonne, where they looked like a rugged belt of silver, standing out from the azure of the sky. That distant view, however, was nothing to the reality, which infinitely exceeded my highest conception.

"You, with your lofty genius, will be enraptured with these glories when you come to see us. I am picturing to myself your amazement, and I feel already that my impression on climbing these colossal peaks will be yours in all their freshness. I shall be ready to worship, with you, that gracious God who has spread around us these marvels of His hands.

"St. Aventin is deliciously situated, being sheltered from the north and embosomed in the mountains; but it is poor and horribly dirty, like all Pyrenean villages. My brother is quite at home already, with his iron-tipped shoes and heavy mountaineer's staff. My head turns as I gaze, even from a distance, at the terrific precipices, and my terrors have often amused him during our walks. Frequently have I passed through terrible gorges, after the manner of children, with shut eyes, carried shuddering in his arms.

"A more wretched presbytery you could not imagine. How you would laugh at my room! Picture to yourself its bare walls of fir planks, and a little window just giving enough light to tell one that the place is not a prison cell in a religious house. Happily, the view is sublime, and my little window takes in a prospect the grandest that ever painter was permitted to see. Julio exults in his position, and has with his own hands decorated my room in the renaissance style, lest I should too strongly contrast its ugly deformities with La Clavière.

"Of the remainder of the presbytery I will not speak. Mind, I do not murmur against these things; humble as they are, God would justly punish me if I did; and I may well praise His goodness.

"Since we came here Julio has been full of happiness. He exhibits me as a sort of curiosity to his mayor, his neighbors, and all the good ladies of his parish. 'Mother So-and-so,' he says, 'isn't Louise lovely?' and the worthies gape at me with stupefaction. 'Ah! but you should hear her play and sing in church,' he exclaims; 'she has the voice of an angel!'

"I tell him he's quite a child, and he laughs a merry child's laugh, with all its simple guilelessness. What a beautiful disposition he has! I fear I shall never make him due return for all his love. Alas! you know the reason. Why have you enslaved me thus? Why did you tell me by the quiet margin of the little pond what has made my heart my own no longer?

"Adieu. Write to me, if you can, every other day, out of compassion for your exiled
"LOUISE."

CHAPTER V.

JULIO'S SUFFERINGS.

THE privation of the solitary home which Louise had termed her exile—her indignation at the robbery of which she was the victim—her feverish anxiety as she hung on the chances of success, all this had excited within her the utmost workings of her woman's nature. Moreover, that instinctive prescience so common in her sex had sketched out for her a sorrowful future, probably soon to be realized, her only impression of which was that her heart would sink beneath its load of bitterness. Yet she did not seriously contemplate so sad a lot; and, even while her prudence went to war with her affections, she abandoned herself to the most entrancing hopes of coming bliss. How impatiently she looked out for the post. How constantly she waited with the glass of wine, which the obliging letter-carrier received as an encouragement to be punctual, and which, in that mountainous country, was far from unacceptable. The days that she heard from Verdalon were painful days. However tender his expressions might be, she always discovered in them some cautious reserve, so fatal to a love ready with unqualified surrender. She would shut herself up hour after hour in her little room, doubtless employed in writing. Often did her sighs reach her brother's ear as he walked in the garden repeating his breviary. He revered that lowly retreat as a sanctuary. Strictly observing that generous law of liberty which is the true loyalty of the human family, he never dreamt of exercising the slightest control over his sister's movements; and she, for her part, made violent efforts to conceal her grief, being ever ready with the sunniest of smiles and the tenderest of words. And when at the close of the day she threaded the mountain paths—occupied alternately with botany or mineralogy—she would lean forward and listen attentively to all he had to say, and so create and enhance the joy of his life.

Joy, alas! too short-lived. Then came the long hours spent in solitude, when Louise abandoned herself to distressful anticipations of calamity. Julio had too much penetration not to see through all this, and felt it keenly. His dream of happiness, cherished for so many years, had passed away as an infant's vision—a vain delusion of his misguided and misinstructed youth. Then, too, his convictions were sustained by facts. Her determined isolation—her tears scarcely dried from her cheeks when she came to the table—her enthusiastic delight when the letters arrived, evinced, with tolerable clearness, the state of her affections. He began to look upon her as his passing guest, staying a

little while at St. Aventin, and cherishing the prospect of a good time coming.

Now, exemplary as this young priest was, he was a man, for all that, endowed with human weakness. So, forgetting all the brave resolutions he had made when he first ascertained their mutual love, he became conscious of a jealous feeling—one of the most painful impressions the heart can sustain. "I ought to love her enough," he had once said, "to sacrifice my own happiness for hers," and in this courageous spirit he had battled on.

Meanwhile her arrival at St. Aventin, and the charm of life with her, were beginning to tell so powerfully upon him that his first heroism slowly yielded to the attack, and his martyr's notion of self-sacrifice lost its power. Therewith came the wild project of giving up the lawsuit, and so securing his sister by changing his poverty from a probability to a certainty.

While he was thus distracted, a chance event contributed no little to his distress. Louise had torn up some sheets of paper, and flung them out of her window one morning, when a violent hurricane blast from the heights of Esquiéry was rushing through the valley. She was amusing herself in her dreariness by watching the bits fluttering about like white butterflies, from terrace to terrace of the slopes of St. Aventin, and disappearing in the depths of the valley of Arboust. That same evening, as Julio was returning from a distant parochial visit, he saw one of these scraps caught in an angle of the rock. Now few people knew how to write in his parish; whose penmanship, then, was this? what heart secret was possibly betrayed there? For the moment he never thought of Louise. Simple curiosity—strongest in men whose position has taken them out of the agitation of public life—impelled him to pick up the fugitive fragment. He recognized his sister's writing in a moment, and assumed that he held in his hand a piece of her letters to Verdalon. A fierce delight swelled in his heart. Possibly he was on the point of obtaining some clew to her secret feelings. But, then, what right had he to take so ungenerous an advantage of the wind's wild play? He urged, admitted, and realized the grave remonstrance; but for once jealousy overpowered him; and as though an enemy's hand had seized the fatal paper and pushed it under his eye, he read the last sentence in Louise's first letter to Verdalon, "Have compassion on an exile."

"So Louise is an exile," he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his pent-up feeling, "in the house of a brother who idolizes her. O my God, is it thus Thou hast reserved for me that cruel deception as the crowning trial of my life? The blow is heavy. If the mere apprehension that I was deluded embittered all my enjoyment of the present blessing, what will be the result of this terrible testimony?"

"And is it Thy law that the loving heart must pass in weariness, and up the hill of Calvary, to its rest?"

"Then I bow all meekly to Thy will, O God ;
for Thy will is wisdom."

CHAPTER VI.

AN AFTERNOON'S CONVERSATION AT THE PROVINCIAL'S.

THE Jesuit college at T—— was duly erected in the southern part of the town. Vast and imposing in dimensions, it towered like a citadel over the aristocratic suburbs. Its white mass arrested as much attention as the splendid choir of St. Stephen's. The Jesuits had had it all their own way. The special gifts on which they had counted had swelled to large amounts, and none of the properties which they had looked out for had failed to be theirs. They had had the satisfaction of witnessing M. Cayron, Madame de Vateil, and M. Legros die in the odor of sanctity, and duly taken care of by the Church in their last moments ; and, thanks to the prudent measures taken, with the exception of those few who contrive to possess themselves of the most secret news, and whom the most skillfully disguised proceedings never escape, no one knew at T—— that four or five families, plundered in the persons of their aged and imbecile parents, had paid for the magnificent structure which had just been erected.

M. Tournichon had displayed the utmost energy and skill in carefully arranging the details of the La Clavière property bequest ; and as he had learned by experience that religious houses are not over-generous, he put his will into his pocket, and, to use a common expression, set off on a visit to the Provincial, for the purpose of squaring accounts.

The little old man, with his thin lips, keen darting eye, and puffed-out nose—pinched in, however, at the extremity—well shaved, and well got up, bent his steps toward the Jesuit abode, where, on his arrival, he was received by the porter, a lay brother, a little bullet-bodied fellow, whose thick black hair was clipped on his forehead in a straight line parallel with his eyebrows.

He, bareheaded, and knowing well that Tournichon was held in honor at that abode, announced the visitor with a tone of most pious and unctuous obsequiousness.

"M. Tournichon, very reverend father."

"Welcome, dear M. Tournichon. Well, have you succeeded thoroughly ? Ah ! that's well ; we are most thankful to hear it."

"Yes, reverend father ; the sainted lady is indeed gone. Every thing was done for her that could be done in the way of a funeral. I have even ordered a tombstone."

"Oh, quite right—very proper—of course. A tombstone, did you say ? I hope not a very expensive one."

"I'm sorry to say, father, that you can't get an article of that kind cheap. However, I made as good a bargain as I could ; five hundred francs will clear it."

"Capital !"

"And now, reverend father, I have brought my bill. As usual, I have set down the debtor and creditor account on each side, and ruled a line between them. Concluding that you would not trouble yourself with details, I totaled the columns, and you see the results. I think I may venture to say that I have done my best with the property of the Church as regards the management of this charitable bequest."

"Excellent man that you are, how thankful we are, and how sorry that there are not more like you !"

"I have had some trouble, I candidly tell you. In the first place, I have been off and on with the thing for ten years—for ten years have I had to play cards with an old woman who was often a very bad player."

"Not cheerful that, I own ; but, then, how meritorious !"

"Such incessant assiduity and perseverance were required to prevent her escaping me. Just before her death, even, she was very near it."

"You don't mean to say so ?"

"I had to have recourse to high words, and so frightened her. I reminded her of her engagements, and of the punishment with which God visits those who draw back from the good way, and so I saved every thing."

"My dear fellow, your conduct is beyond all praise. Oh ! what a bright reward you will have for this glorious zeal in the cause of truth !"

"So glorious that, thanks to the assistance of old age and doctors, all has come right at last. That rascal of a doctor—he has sent in a terrible bill !"

"We must dispute the amount, then."

"Don't be afraid ; I've done that. Moreover, I showed him that, if he were too exacting, he would find his list of patients diminished. So his fat bill of three thousand francs—"

"Three thousand francs—bless my soul !"

"Has been reduced two thirds, and even its present amount apologized for."

"Admirable ! You are a clever fellow."

Then the old man, having opened the document of the La Clavière account, pointed timidly to the modest figure of 50,276 francs as to a trifle not worth naming, calculating at five per cent. his journeys, fees, and expenses of all sorts ; barring which sum, the whole property, real and personal, fixture and movable, was handed over to the Father Provincial, to do as he pleased with. Thoroughly as the Provincial had known of old the mainspring of old Tournichon's zeal, he could not refrain from exclaiming,

"Fifty thousand two hundred and seventy-six francs !—why, that is outrageous, M. Tournichon."

"It's merely five per cent., very reverend father."

"But do remember how very poor we are."

"Merely five per cent., very reverend father."

"Then you will surely contribute to our funds and works, M. Tournichon ?"

"You are down in my will, very reverend fa-

ther. I owe too much to the Church and the religious fraternities not to give them a portion of my modest competence—after my death. Meanwhile, I have a daughter, reverend father—a daughter—you understand.”

“Come, come, that’ll all be right enough. We’ll look at the account another day, when you will be more accommodating.”

“Reverend father, at my age, I must set my house in order. I need a tranquil spirit. Believe me, I have done for you what I wouldn’t have done in any other cause.”

And again pointing out the total to the Provincial, he showed him the words, “Settled by us.”

“Be good enough, please, to audit the account, and put your signature.”

“But you are very dear; won’t you take any thing off?”

“Impossible, reverend father. Five per cent. for playing cards with an old woman for ten years—why, it’s positively nothing.”

The reverend father took a pen, hesitated a moment, looked at the amount, and signed it. Then putting the voluminous document in his portfolio, he muttered to himself,

“The fellow has fleeced us.”

“May God have you in His keeping, reverend father.”

And Tournichon, thankful to have his little bill settled, made a low bow and withdrew.

There was a large gathering of fathers in the Provincial’s apartment. It was the afternoon recreation time; and Tournichon having been seen leaving the room, that curiosity, which is alive even in the mind of Jesuit humanity, asserted its presence. Some of them had ascertained that vague rumors had been abroad in the town on the subject of the La Clavière property, and were consequently anxious. Others, of a more confiding temperament, exulted in the growing advancement of their house.

“How God is prospering us, father!”

“Let us ask Him to continue His favors,” was the answer.

“Yes, indeed,” said another father. “Here’s a fresh triumph in the case of Madame de la Clavière. That capital old Tournichon has been very clever: there’s not his equal for perseverance. Ah! if we had but men of his stamp every where.”

“Have you had any news from Italy, father?”

“Yes, and very bad. We are driven from all our houses in Umbria and the Marches: only Rome is left to us in the whole peninsula.”

“I think it would be well,” said one of the oldest of the fathers, “if we paused a little before building. The projected improvements will be very costly, and prospects are gloomy. You may rest assured that if there happened to be a political crisis in Europe, like that of 1848, we should be victimized first. There is a very wise proverb, ‘Keep a pear against you’re thirsty.’ Should the storm break, it would be very desirable to have the needful about us.”

“They can’t bring any thing against us in

France,” said the Provincial. “You see we never appear in any movement. Our general’s orders are punctually executed. Not one of our fathers takes any part in the struggle of episcopacy with the powers that be. The *Catholic Atlas*, which is, in point of fact, our organ, is avowedly quite independent of us. We even repudiate it ourselves when we see occasion to do so. We never set foot in its office. Our colleges maintain a most scrupulous reserve; and all our efforts to enroll volunteers in the papal army, which was routed so unhappily at Castelfidardo, were scrupulously transacted with heads of families, and that in so quiet a manner as to awake in no degree the suspicion of the government.”

“Our enemies are too clever, father,” said the old Jesuit, “to be easily deceived. If we have never taken to newspaper writing in France, we have the *Civiltà Cattolica* at Rome, and our great work is the centre of the Catholic movement against the modern sentiment. It is from that quarter that the deadliest animosity may be looked for—animosity equally clear-sighted and implacable. Let Louis Napoleon fall to-morrow, and a new revolution will raise the cry, ‘Down with the Jesuits!’”

“We’ve not come to that pass yet,” said another. “Then, too, we have so much influence over the faithful that no one will venture to attack us for fear of outraging their Catholic consciences. All the clergy would rise to defend us.”

“I don’t agree with you,” said the father who had introduced the discussion. “Nor do I fancy that the clergy are particularly fond of us. There are, it is true, bishops, vicars-general, and young professors in seminaries who admire our self-denial. Our motto, ‘*Perinde ac cadaver*,’ has filled them with admiration for us. But all the rest are our enemies who are outwardly civil to us, but who would rejoice over our fall. Almost all the Paris clergy hate us.”

“Oh, the clergy of Paris! Every one knows that. And it’s taken good note of at Rome, too.”

“Yes; but if the government lasts, these will be the men that will be made bishops. And when they hold the sees of France, you will see whether they will trouble their heads much about Rome or Roman opinions.”

“Plenty of time before that happens.”

“Very likely; but in eight or ten years all the old prelates will have died off; and if, during that brief period, the antipathy to us increases, I shall see, to my sorrow, that I have been a true prophet. Do you know what will prove most injurious to us? Why, the development of the other orders in France. That’s what annoys the clergy so. They feel themselves being gradually ousted from preaching, and in danger of soon being turned out of their pulpits. The Dominicans, Franciscans, and Lazarists will be our formidable rivals for this honor among them, and the secular clergy will never forgive us our success. You may make

up your minds that there is a strong reaction among them against all the religious orders, and especially those given to preaching.

"Then, again, such of them as are taking up the teaching line are jealous of our colleges, whose prosperity they watch with apprehension. They complain that we leave them the scum only—the lowest orders of society—to turn into priests. 'When the young man of high birth was educated in our seminaries,' say they, 'with the pauper's child, a useful link was established between classes; but you (religious orders, Jesuits especially) have run off with the aristocracy.' And, in this complaint, don't you think they are, on the whole, right? Of course, the affair is no concern of ours. We find the system answer. So much the worse for them if they get only snobs for their clergy. Only you can easily understand that that sort of thing is hard to swallow; and when the moment of danger comes, so far from raising a finger to help us, they will joyfully leave us to our fate. 'We can do without Jesuits well enough,' they'll say: 'we can't do without clergymen.'"

"I think you put it rather too strongly, don't you? I have traveled, equally with yourself, through France, and have met members of the clergy on retreat occasions. I can assure you that they have the greatest respect for our order."

"I am quite ready to admit this of many among them, but even that respect is not without fear. They are delighted to receive us on the occasions to which you refer, because we don't annoy them. We haven't what they call large sleeves; and when some poor wretch, who has managed to get into hot water, takes his retreat, he is only too thankful to find, instead of a harsh judge, a Jesuit father ready to absolve him, and say, 'Go in peace.' That's our great merit in their eyes. They have severe rulers of their own, to whom they dare not unbosom themselves. Moreover, they know too much about them. Whereas we, birds of passage, confess and release them, carry off their sin in our pockets, and go on our way. Apart, however, from this little service, for which they are duly grateful, they have no very tender regard for us. There is, between us and them, a terrible point of dispute, namely, money. And the needy priest—paid badly by the state and his parish—is hard to manage on this point. They never lose sight of the fact that, in the towns especially, we get the best of the offerings. They call us confessors of fine linen; and the vicars are specially sensitive about the confidence of their tip-top parishioners. Ah! father, I see you haven't listened at doors as I have. 'Oh, these Jesuits!' they say; 'when a fine lady wants a mass, the fee is always a goodly piece of gold, wrapped up in scented paper.' If it is a vicar of a parish, he gets, at the very most, the modest sum of five francs. These are among the causes of their ill will; but I have yet to name the chief. Public opinion, in the higher circles, puts us over their heads; and this, strange to

say, they don't seem to like. So we had better be on our guard. We are verging on great issues. Solitary individuals may please themselves; but corporations, with their mutual claims, should be always wary."

"There is a good deal of truth in what you say."

Such is a summary of the conversation held at the Provincial's that afternoon. They were on the point of separating, when Father Quentin came hurriedly in from the town, with a look of extreme consternation on his pale countenance.

"Oh, father, such news!"

"What's the matter now?"

"I've just heard that the Abbé Julio, in his own and his sister's name, means to attack his aunt's will on the ground of its only being a fictitious bequest to M. Tournichon in our favor. I got the information, unfortunately, from too reliable a quarter, having been told by a magistrate who is very partial to us. To-morrow, or the next day at the latest, the writs will be served, and the cause called on. I have even heard the name of their advocate—M. August Verdelon, an ex-abbé, a terrible enemy of ours, who will run us hard. Good heavens, what a misfortune!"

"Don't excite yourself, father," said the Provincial. "If God sends us the cross, let us bear it lovingly."

"It is added," continued the other, not heeding the Provincial's pious suggestion, "that the whole affair will create a great sensation. Whatever the issue be, we shall suffer severely."

"Then we must submit meekly. Our order has risen to eminence through trial of every kind. Father, suppose you retired to the chapel, and asked for a little courage and quietness."

"I knew that the will would be attacked," he said afterward.

CHAPTER VII.

A DELICATE NEGOTIATION.

It was of importance to the lawful heirs of Madame de la Clavière that Madelette's revelations to Verdelon, made in the presence of the curé of La Clavière, should not be disclosed before the matter was brought to a legal issue. The advocate was in no danger of committing any indiscretion, nor was there much fear from the curé, an old and wise man, who was fond of Julio, and, besides that, entertained toward the reverend fathers that special clerical animosity which was all the more indelible from the fact that it never found vent in words. Moreover, he was a zealous priest of unimpeachable character, though it must be acknowledged that, if he was conspicuous for the excellencies of his day, he had its defects in the shape of petty jealousies, deep resentment, and a spirit of rivalry in confessional, pulpit, and general ministrations.

There was in his parish a small sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin, and greatly revered in all the country round. The statue of the Madonna was a hideous object in wood, clumsily and grotesquely carved. It had been discovered in the twelfth century among some thorn-bushes, whence it had been carried away to be installed in the parish church. The night after its removal, however, it had, somehow or other, returned to its bush; and this achievement was accomplished two or three times over. So, as there could be no possible doubt that the wooden lady had a peculiar fancy for her old abode, a chapel was built on the spot for her better accommodation. Such was the legend—a legend very like some 300 or 400 others of the same class. The curé of La Clavière had no great faith in it, and made merry often on the fetishism of certain devout females of his flock. On the 8th of September, however, the day of the chapel fête, all the illustrious ladies of the neighborhood, including T——, came over on pilgrimage, on which occasion the building was magnificently decorated; a most carefully prepared sermon was delivered, and a collection made for the poor of the parish, to whom the good curé gave the greater part of the visitors' offerings, returning to his presbytery on the evening of this high festival very well satisfied with his day's work. The sermon had been most successful; ditto the attendance; ditto, especially, the offertory. Grant that there was a large dash of superstition in the whole affair, there was also simple faith, in part, thoroughly poetical.

The curé of La Clavière had the reputation of being an admirable spiritual guide. Ladies of the highest rank in the neighborhood flocked to his confessional during their temporary residence at their country seats. His brethren, too, were in the habit of inviting him to preach on their patron saints' days, all which promoted general good, and the credit of the worthy pastor. Meanwhile, the Jesuits resolved to purchase a country house about a league from La Clavière, where they built an exquisite Gothic chapel, dedicated to Mary, on the altar of which they placed a beautiful white marble statue of the Virgin. Their great fête was also on the 8th of September; and, in less than two years, the new pilgrim shrine had eclipsed the old. The aristocracy crowded to the Madonna of the Jesuits, leaving to the curé only the good women of his parish. Similarly, the noble and wealthy penitents tailed off to the reverend fathers. The clergy round caught the infection, and, anxious to secure for themselves favorable archiepiscopal notice, invited the Jesuits to preach in their churches, so that the poor old curé saw himself stripped at once of his fame and those profitable revenues which he had so benevolently devoted to his church and poor.

Now it is quite true that the tricks of his enemies, as denounced to him by Madelette, roused his honest indignation; yet it must be admitted that he felt, at the same time, a sly gratification

in discovering his rivals in fault. And Verdelon knew human nature well enough to feel tolerably sure that he would be the last man to warn his enemies of the coming storm. Yet, not many hours after the confidential interview between himself, Madelette, and the curé, all that had passed had been imparted to one of the fathers of the rival chapel, who repaired immediately to T—— to communicate his knowledge to the Provincial. A secret council was immediately assembled, and, after two hours' conference, the telegraph was put in motion to summon a certain Father Candal from Paris.

Father Candal did not belong to the province of T——. He had, however, one year preached in the town during Lent, with such success that even the reverend fathers, despite the spirit of their order, were a little jealous. He had been invited by a species of compulsion. The high-born ladies of Languedoc, who passed the winter in Paris, were never tired of extolling his marvelous talents. Their praises found their way among the magistrates and leading merchants, and soon the father's presence was implored by the faithful of every class. The Jesuits complied at once. The coveted preacher arrived. His triumph exceeded the highest anticipations that had been formed, and the fathers secretly resolved never to have him there again. From that time he began to be in ill odor with his order, having been for a long period their spoiled child. There are few orators among them. Two or three names are prominent as exceptional cases, and that is all. Hence the necessity among them of economizing their resources. Father Candal, who was not deficient in acuteness, felt his value, and, to some extent, took advantage of it. He preferred remaining in the society, knowing well that a Jesuit orator is more likely to rise than a secular priest of equal talent, who may be many years before he gets a name. He was partial to easy victories, but he had no very earnest faith in the famous motto, "Perinde ac cadaver." His success as a speaker, together with his undoubted influence over the female mind, had slightly turned his brain. In plain words, he was a coxcomb; and he was known to say that, had he been raffled for, like Father Lef—, he could have raised enough money to build a finer church than St. Peter's at Rome. All this was telling against him. His superiors were very willing that he should be a fine ladies' preacher, but they found that he had abused his influence.

Things were in this state when the telegraphic dispatch from T—— was received at Paris. It was evident that there was something important in hand. The old Jesuits shook their heads: "Such a summons would make the puppy more insufferably conceited than ever," they said. However, as they could not well refuse the application, they sent for Candal, and ordered him off to Languedoc direct. He reflected for a moment, knowing well that it had been decided that he should never return to T——, where he

felt that he had borne his honors with a rather uplifted head. If this decision had been reversed, it was because he was wanted. Oh Jesuit, Jesuit and a half! He bowed deferentially, and offered but one objection to his sudden departure; he had been engaged to preach at a retreat of the *Sacré-Cœur* for the ladies of St. Germain; he would be required for that purpose in two days.

"Very well," said a witty old father, sarcastically, "write to the superior and tell her you've got a bad throat."

Be it known that Father Candal's throat was the pretext frequently alleged for indulgence in prolonged leave of absence. He understood the sneer, but passed it over in silence, and took his leave, saying simply,

"I will start at once."

"You see," said a good father, not very quick-sighted in his opinions, and full of zeal for the company, "he understands the spirit of our order—he hears and obeys."

"Don't trust him," said another; "he won't be long among us; his conceit will be his ruin."

The Jesuit arrived at T——, and received a cordial reception from his brethren. What a happiness it was to greet again so illustrious a member of their order, who had done so much good during that celebrated Lent! To all which he replied, with a vigorous attempt to assume a modest air, asking himself, meanwhile, what these civil speeches meant, and what might be the tremendous need of his services which had induced them to summon him. The Provincial led him aside with a few members of the council, and talked to him for four hours on affairs of the most urgent importance. As Father Candal left the apartment, he said,

"Make yourself happy, reverend father. I will answer for my success, and will tell you every thing that passes."

And a proud smile of conscious triumph played on his lips.

"He is more conceited and presumptuous than ever," said the Provincial; "but that style of man succeeds best with women."

Now there lived at T—— a lady of great repute in society, and especially in so-called religious society. The Countess of —— was forty-eight years old; her heart cold, and her disposition bigoted, while her belief in the excellence of her own principles and views knew no limits. Whatever passion she had resided in her head, and evaporated in burning words. Her relatives had induced her to marry for money at the mature age of fifteen, offering to her an old man for a husband, with the recommendation of a title and sixty thousand livres. This marriage was repugnant to all her tastes and wishes. Left a widow at twenty, she made no attempt to seek in a second union the happiness she had never hoped to find in her first. Furthermore, she was completely under the influence of Father Boniface—a sly old Jesuit, if ever there was one—who knew too well the ad-

vantages to be derived by the society from cultivating a widow lady, rich, titled, enthusiastic, and self-opinionated to the highest degree, to neglect to set in motion all the directions of the *monita sacra* touching the method of getting hold of widows and their property. These directions have over and over again been repudiated by the Jesuits; but, even granting that they never actually penned them, there is no denying that they have been compiled after the model of their proceedings, and no one understood the spirit of them, or was better able to carry them out than this same Father Boniface.

Without quitting the world, the countess lived a life of the most outrageous austerity. Her irreproachable conduct made her as proud as a Pharisee. She would not confess that this virtuous character which her acquaintance extolled so loudly was owing, on the whole, to the coldness of her disposition and the haughtiness of her temperament. Thanks to the hundred voices which the fathers raised in her honor, her triumph was undoubted. By them erected on a pedestal, the whole of T—— bowed reverently before her. In a word, the Jesuits knew so well how to turn her merits and demerits to account, that they succeeded in reducing her completely to their influence.

She had reached the period of woman's second youth. A quietly increasing stoutness had removed the angularity of her features, a change which generally ensues about the age of forty. At that time, the sternest feminine spirits, seeing that their first youth has fled forever, and knowing that its new edition will have but a fugitive existence, experience, if they have never known the joy of domestic affections, a certain indescribable pang. If they have ever loved, they mourn over the buried yearnings, and wonder whether there will ever be a resurrection of them. If their heart has remained untouched, they feel that their life has been lost, and suffer accordingly. The countess was now experiencing the return of this early coquetry, and determined, under its influence, to spend her winters in Paris. Jesuits know human nature, especially woman's nature, and, seeing the danger to their sway in this particular instance, resolved to grapple with it. They forewarned her of the peril of returning to worldly influences; put her in communication with Father Candal; and induced her to go to one of his sermons, from which she returned boiling over with enthusiastic delight. He was agreeable and handsome; his manners were polished; above all, he knew how to flatter ladies. The reverend fathers have always taken good care to have such men among them for influencing widows at that particular crisis. Father Candal consolidated the work of his confederates at T——, and reported on the subject complete success.

We may add that the countess had a fine estate near La Clavière, and knew Louise and Julio intimately, as well as Verdalon, and Made-

lette even, who had been recommended to her notice by Father Briffard.

She had not seen her reverend friend for nearly two years, but they had corresponded diligently, the Jesuit's letters being amusingly divided between professional exhortations and evening parties.

Behold her in her grand drawing-room, tastefully arranging the flowers of a pattern which she was embroidering for the Jesuit chapel. The door opens, and in walks Father Candal, duly announced by a livery servant. A cry of delighted surprise greets the visitor, who is welcomed with the utmost cordiality. He takes things with equal grace and ease, and the conversation turns upon the motives which have brought him to T—.

"I am going to Eaux Bonnes," he said; "Dr. Cruveilhier has recommended me to take the waters. I suffer incessantly from my throat, to such an extent that I may perhaps be compelled to give up preaching altogether."

"Oh, I trust not," rejoined the countess; "that would be a calamity! You are so young yet, and may do so much good."

"God has His own purposes, madam, and we must submit. I was ordered to go direct to the Pyrenees, without stopping at T—. In our society we must not dispute, but obey. However, when a visit to you was at stake, I couldn't but make an exception. So I obtained permission, not without considerable trouble, to stop here two days."

"And you have done this for me, my father?" she said, with a smile.

"Could I possibly pass so near you, madam, without calling to see you?"

The lady's look of delighted gratitude baffled description.

"I am thankful, indeed," he continued, "to find you in such excellent health; and, but for my ecclesiastical character, I should venture a few compliments on the brilliancy of your complexion. Upon my word, you look about thirty."

The countess bridled and simpered, and tried to assume a modest air.

"And yet," she said, "I ought to be ageing before my time. My youth has been so painfully tried."

"You must thank God, madam, for those trials; by them He draws you to Himself."

"Yes, indeed, father; and thank him, too, who has shown me the way in which I ought to walk."

"I asked God to instruct me to that end. I was naturally interested in your experience. Your position was so calculated to move me."

And the father sighed (a sigh is always effective if it is well finished off), and the lady sighed in unison. The Jesuit, thinking that by this time he had done enough in the sentimental line, resumed in a more indifferent tone,

"I am confident that your peaceful spirit will enable you to live much longer than your excellent friend Madame de la Clavière, whose

death I heard of, to my great grief, on my arrival. I met her occasionally at your house, and was exceedingly struck by the fixedness and devotion of her character."

"Yes, she was a real saint, and equally devoted with myself to your society."

"You have heard of her will?"

"Most certainly I have."

"And you know the particulars of it?"

"I know that it appoints our excellent friend, M. Tournichon, whom you have frequently seen here, sole legatee, in the interest, that is to say, of your order, which can not have too much for all the work it is called to do."

"And what does the Abbé Julio—the philosopher—priest, the darling of the Revolutionary party, say to all this?"

"If M. Julio were to speak his thoughts, he would say that his aunt knew him too well to leave him her fortune, inasmuch as he would never have employed it in accordance with her views."

"Very possibly. And what about his sister: I knew her four years ago as a most pious girl, intending to enter the convent of the Sacré-Cœur."

"An intention which she seems to have abandoned under her brother's influence. You can't imagine the mischief this priest has done in the Church. He ought to have been interdicted ages ago."

"They say he has numerous admirers at T—."

"Perfectly true. He knew how to make the most of his intimate connection with the late archbishop for the purpose of forming a party round him. The present occupant of the see temporizes with these people, because they belong to the government; and his predecessor, you see, was a cardinal."

"And he entertains the idea that the hat would look as well on him as on his predecessor?"

"Just that."

"That's the way with all the secular clergy," said the Jesuit, shrugging his shoulders. "They are eaten up by ambition. Ambition, madam, may be a virtue if it is purely unselfish. Religious orders, our own especially, realize this idea. All our members are inspired with the noble idea of seeing the society increase in numbers, wealth, and dignity, so as to become more and more qualified for its great work in the world. As individuals, we wish to ignore all these advantages; in becoming Jesuits, we renounce even the dignities of the Church. But we would have our company powerful because it is necessary. However, to return to these young people. So this young Louise has not improved, you say?"

"Not she; she is dreadfully fallen off. She has left Father Briffard altogether."

"More's the pity. I have a very poor opinion of the motives which have led her to that course. Who is her confessor now?"

"The curé of her parish."

"Ah! M. B——; a priest, I fancy, somewhat after the Abbé Julio's style. There is a pilgrim shrine in his parish—our Lady of the Thorns."

"Just so; and he hates the Jesuits, because they have built an oratory near his own."

"I know that. He is not wanting in talent; he bears an excellent character; but he is not a thorough man; he has no inner life, and hence he is utterly disqualified for the guidance of souls. Indeed, that's the great defect of the secular clergy."

"But very far from the only one, reverend father. My own opinion inclines to that of the worthy Capuchin, Father Basil, who says that their only use is to make sacristans for the Jesuits."

Father Candal smiled.

"These excellent Capuchins," he said, "have always been our most devoted friends; they promote our ideas among the people; a task, however, which does not hinder them from thinking more of their interests than ours. Ah! those mendicant friars! Were their founder to come to life again, he would be not a little astonished at the discovery he would make, designing as he did that his followers should live in wooden or earth huts, have small, low churches, and be always poor. However, such as they are, they help us a little. But, with respect to the curé of La Clavière, he's not the man to forward Miss Louise in the matter of her religious vocation."

"Oh, as to that, it's all up with her vocation, I assure you. The fact is, her aunt would have done much more for her had she persevered in her original idea of entering the *Sacré-Cœur*, though she was very far from disposed to put it into her niece's power to remain in a world which would have so many snares for one so irresolute. In fact, I am perfectly sure that she has sacrificed her feelings to her anxiety for her niece's spiritual good. As for the Abbé Julio, the very day he preached that unfortunate sermon at the Carmelite convent, on an occasion which issued in such a disgraceful result, his aunt said to me, 'My nephew shall never be my heir.'"

"Ah! she said so to you, did she?"

"Those were her very words."

"Good; we must remember them at the right time and place."

"Do you know, reverend father, that your society has fallen on its feet in this affair. Tournichon told Father Boniface that the property was above six hundred thousand francs."

"Not so fast there," said the father to himself; "we must dismiss the subject." (Aloud)—

"Quite true, countess; and at this moment we are in great need of such help. We are devising schemes for the glory and triumph of the Church which we shall never be able to realize without resources in proportion to their vastness. To work for us and with us is to work for God, while those who are against us are more His enemies than ours. Thanks to them,

this fortune may yet be filched from Tournichon, and so from us."

"Is it possible? I understood that the will was perfectly valid."

"It is; yet, in spite of that, it will be disputed. Our fathers heard of this at the moment of my arrival."

"Disputed—by whom?"

"By Madame de la Clavière's heirs. The fact is, our society here have made a mistake in the whole affair. Tournichon and Father Briffard thought to retain Madelette, the old servant of the family, who was her mistress's mistress, but they omitted to take her avarice into their calculations. They made her too small an allowance, and she, in the bitterness of her resentment, has discovered a sudden and violent affection for the nephew and niece. She has told them so much that it would appear that she has been practicing eaves-dropping, a lawful act at times, but not always. There is a certain story in connection with the notary whom the old lady sent for, which, when related in Madelette's fashion, would be very damaging to our interests. Tournichon again, thinking that Louise and her brother were in utter ignorance of what was going on, told them (he is a great ass at times) that the last wishes of their aunt would most undoubtedly be carried out. This was reported to the advocate Verdclon; he had a conference with our mortal enemy, the curé of La Clavière, in which the woman took part, and the result will be a sweet little lawsuit to recover the property, by representing it as a mere pseudo-trust."

"Just what it is."

"Exactly; but, as the law does not happen to recognize these trusts, the will will be canceled."

"But are you sure the law doesn't recognize them?"

"Quite; but you see, madam," he added, with a smile, "we do not recognize the law. Had this suit been undertaken four or five years ago, it would have been all up with us; but now the case is different. Madelette is a formidable witness. I am confident that the half of what she says is pure invention; but, notwithstanding that, she has seen and heard enough to be able to prove the trust, unless she retracts, and the motive which actuates her is removed by the time the suit commences. In that case, our enemies would be nicely caught. Possibly, the poor woman, who means well at the bottom, but who has been seduced by avarice, might return to a better mind. But this is hardly to be hoped for. The love of money ruined Judas, and Judas died impenitent."

"But is there no other way of stopping this wretched action?"

"Our fathers here, madam, have deliberated most anxiously at this crisis. One of the youngest of their number suggested a course, but his counsel was rejected, wisely as he himself agreed. And yet—"

"But that counsel, reverend father, what was

it?" And every feature of her face expressed the most eager curiosity.

"You love us enough to justify my telling you our secrets. It was that Madelette's silence should be bought."

"Not such bad advice, after all. Father Briffard is skillful, and he is her confessor."

"But what if she refused? We dare not commit ourselves to so dangerous an experiment. Moreover, the woman's demands would be in proportion to the value of her services. This is the business aspect of the matter."

"Any very great difficulty there?"

"Not by any means: these are not the reasons that led to the rejection of the idea. There is the moral consideration as well. You see, madam, our society is in a sense an aggregate individual, and so has its individual scruples. There is not one of us who would like to bargain with this unhappy woman to obtain her silence, even though the cause were perfectly just; for what can be more just than the right of disposing of what belongs to us? Every law which fetters the free will of a testator is an attack upon property. It is an unrighteous law, infected with socialism, and may be evaded without the smallest scruple. At the same time, madam, though it is generally believed that we hold to the maxim, 'The end justifies the means,' we are reluctant to do as a society what we would not do as individuals. We dislike paying this person to perform an act of duty. We might do it for another order, even in the maintenance of a worldly interest, if it affected our true friends, but for ourselves we can not. We wish to preserve our dignity, and are averse to giving a handle (for every thing gets abroad) to the calumnious outcry raised against our venerable society."

The countess was lost in admiration of this delicate and super-exquisite sense of honor exhibited by the good fathers. She made no reply, but seemed lost in a reverie.

"Just so," she remarked, after a few minutes' silence. "I understand you; you would rather not act yourselves?"

And, changing the conversation, she spoke on other matters. When the Jesuit rose to take his leave, she accompanied him to the end of the approach. There they separated. As soon as the father was alone, he rubbed his hands with an air of triumph.

The Countess of ——— ordered her carriage. She took with her a pocket-book full of bank-notes, and ordered the coachman to drive to the chateau of La Clavière. Reaching the house, she asked for Madelette, fully convinced all the time that she was acting entirely on her own idea.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STORM AT THE PALACE.

THE alarming lawsuit in the matter of the La Clavière property occupied the most anxious

attention of the Jesuits. The trial day was approaching. The father had ascertained from the countess that Madelette, under the influence of better feelings, was prepared to retract her previous indiscreet statements, and to meet any questions likely to be put to her with the simple reply, "I recall all I said; my annoyance with M. Tournichon made me say it." In fact, she had been thoroughly trained by the countess, and there was no longer any cause for apprehension, as far as she was concerned.

There was another plan also which the Provincial communicated to his secret council.

"The archbishop," he said, "will be glad of our humble services at Rome in that little trifle of the hat which has been on his mind these two years. Our general is furthering his views, and he knows that we can assist him very materially in this matter so near his heart. Now what I want to know is whether we could not give him to understand, in some way or other, that if he compelled the Abbé Julio to abandon his proceedings against us, our overwhelming gratitude would make us redouble our efforts to help him to this precious hat."

"A delicate matter that," said a father present. "Rather serious, asking an archbishop to interfere in the family affairs of one of his priests."

"Really, brother," said Father Boniface, with a cunning smile, "do you mean to say that? Go along with you. Why, there's nothing bishops are so fond of as meddling with their clergy. They have rendered them so malleable that they can square them to any of their purposes. Accustomed to this absolute obedience, they are furious if they are resisted. And were this Abbé Julio to turn out, as I suspect, one of the obstreperous spirits, the archbishop would think mighty little of saying to him, 'Give up this lawsuit, or I'll interdict you to-morrow.' Remember that threat is omnipotent with the clergy. To be interdicted—why, it is to be flung into a dungeon, in the judgment of the religious world. A priest always cowers before that terrible prospect; and my opinion is, that this will have to be the weapon employed in our young friend's case."

An inclination of heads all round in token of general assent.

"Shall I communicate directly with his highness," asked the Provincial, "or shall I employ the vicar-general as a go-between, knowing him to be thoroughly in our interests? Bishops who are fond of flattering us outwardly, and making us unlimited promises, are not always heartily on our side; and I am much mistaken if our archbishop is not using us as his instruments, without having any very deep affection for our society. But I can rely upon M. Gagué."

"In that case, reverend father," said Father Briffard, "I would advise your securing his offices in this delicate matter. We know how anxious he is for a mitre. Promise him our best endeavors in his behalf with those secret agencies that we have at our command; then

you need have no farther anxiety in his case—he will work the thing.”

A few days after this Julio left St. Aventin, and took the diligence through Luchon to T——. It was his first trip through the lovely valley of the Peak since his return to his mountain home with his beloved Louise. On the present occasion he was abstracted and sad. A letter from the palace, very abrupt and brief, in the handwriting of the vicar-general, had required his immediate attendance on the archbishop on business of extreme importance.

What could this business be? he asked himself. Was it the affair of Mother Judas? But no; monseigneur had glanced at that on his pastoral visit to St. Aventin. Was it the inquiry in reference to the pretended vision of Lisette Cabarous? But the archbishop had not made the slightest reference to it either privately or from the pulpit; and, had he wished to give it prominence, he most certainly would have dwelt upon it in his sermon. Mother Judas had been on the look-out for some such allusion; the little devotees of the parish had been scandalized at the archiepiscopal silence, and given free vent to the opinion that the curé had prejudiced him against it. Could it be the affair of the lawsuit? But what right had the archbishop to meddle in family matters?

Artful as Monseigneur Le Cricq was, he felt that it was no easy thing to bring a man like Julio to his knees, and compel him to comply with his demand or yield to his threats. However, he made the attempt; and when Julio was introduced into his private study, he began his attack by adopting the plausible style.

“I have sent for you, M. le Curé, on a matter of great importance—very great. I refer, you understand, to this lawsuit against the Jesuits. In any other circumstances, nothing would induce me to interfere with private affairs, provided that the priest involved in them managed them without creating a scandal. But the present case is an exception. There are involved in it the interests and honor of an order of high rank in the Church. This lawsuit, it would seem, threatens to assume large proportions. Your advocate has already created a great stir about it; he is a person of mark, and the opportunity of pleading against the Jesuits is too tempting not to attract such a man in the first instance. The Liberal and Revolutionary party, strong here as every where, reckon much on working the thing as an instrument of developing their hatred against the Church, and promoting that disgraceful persecution which is rife in Rome, and even in France. Hence I infer that this lawsuit will be nothing short of a public scandal. Your unfortunate opinions, so freely uttered from the pulpit, and recorded in that miserable pamphlet attributed to my venerable predecessor, have won you the high esteem of the skeptic and the blasphemer. Very bad friends these, M. le Curé; I can not congratulate you on their alliance. On the other hand, you will not venture to accuse me of having act-

ed harshly toward you. Men are everlastingly crying out, nowadays, against episcopal tyranny. Judge yourself with how much truth, so far as I am concerned. I passed over that shameful affair of the book, with reference to which I received letters from every corner of France. As to your sermons, so little in harmony with the teaching of the Church that their every sentence has been impregnated with heresy, I have shut my eyes to them. I have been worried out of my life with complaints against you; you will never know the battles I have had to fight in your behalf. I put off all the protests on the ground of your youth, the rashness of your character, and the inevitable evils of extempore preaching. When a grave representation affecting your moral character was formally addressed to my secretary by a lady of distinguished merit, through an eminent priest, whose character frees him from all possible suspicion of carelessness, I took refuge in a secret inquiry, absolutely indispensable if I would screen myself from a charge of laxity of discipline. These circumstances go far to prove that I have not treated you with severity.

“Now, however, it is different. The Jesuits are powerful and influential here. To go to war with them is highly imprudent. Archbishop though I am, I tell you, in confidence, I wouldn't for worlds be involved in a lawsuit with them. It would be a case of earthen jug against iron jug. Not to mention the invariable risk of losing, in the uncertainty that attends the decisions of legal tribunals, I should array against myself the whole town, which holds them in such high, and, for the matter of that, in such deserved respect. Ah! M. le Curé, an archbishop is here to-day and gone to-morrow; but the Jesuits remain. A corporation does not die. Let me, then, recommend to you the course I should take were the matter mine. I should relinquish the struggle. I know that you will be prepared to urge, on the other hand, your sister's interests. A very proper consideration, I frankly admit. I can easily understand that you look upon yourself as, to a certain extent, her guardian. Yet your good aunt was of opinion that an annuity was enough for the young lady who was generally understood to be destined for the cloister. As for yourself, your professional income, with the allowance provided in the will, must surely be amply sufficient for your wants. We don't require much as priests. Meanwhile, if you are disposed to accept my suggestions in this matter, with reference to which, understand me, religious opinion, paramount in this place, might drive me to measures which I should be most unwilling to adopt, I think we might make some compromise. God knows how willingly I would mediate between you and the worthy fathers. As your only possible interest in the matter is, of course, your sister's prospects, we might induce them to come to some understanding—either to increase her annuity, or to pay her a respectable sum down, as dowry, should she wish to marry. Such, M.

le Curé, are the propositions I make to you, before acting at all myself in the interest of your own peace and quietness, of our religion attacked, at the present day, on every side, and in the hope of depriving our enemies of a triumph over the faith, and so avoiding the scandal they would occasion by publishing the whole affair, *in extenso*, in their unprincipled journals. Would it not be better for you to retire from the struggle, while I, espousing your interests, as every bishop is bound to do for his priests, endeavored to effect an arrangement the terms of which I should be only too happy to assist in settling? What do you say?"

"I have only one course open to me, monseigneur—to oppose, in the interests of justice, a most flagrant robbery. Had I had any doubt as to the nature of M. Tournichon's relation to this affair, in the interests of the Jesuits, your proceeding to-day would have confirmed my suspicions. In determining, in my own and my sister's name, to prosecute a suit which must issue in our favor, I most solemnly declare that I am less actuated by a desire to recover our own than by a feeling of indignation against a long-matured conspiracy. It is with pain I add, monseigneur, that I grieve to see a bishop espousing such a bad cause, and proposing a compromise which would be no less a spoliation than the original act."

"You misunderstand me, M. le Curé. You imagined that I was commissioned by the Jesuits to come to terms with you. I swear most solemnly that this is not the case. The idea was entirely my own."

And the archbishop said what was perfectly true. The Jesuits had induced the vicar-general to use his influence with his master to force Julio to give up the prosecution, but they were too cunning to suffer themselves to appear in the matter. So the archbishop was not their tool.

"When escape from a scandal is the matter at issue," he continued, "a community is ready to make sacrifices of the most costly description. I am sure that the Jesuits, to avoid drawing upon themselves general attention, would prevail on good M. Tournichon to modify the terms of the bequest, on the understanding that you, for your part, would be ready to make the concession required of you."

"In that case, monseigneur, I can not comprehend why you have negotiated in the matter."

"Possibly not, M. le Curé; but my conduct and motives are plain enough, for all that. The question is, the abandonment of a discreditable lawsuit, directed by a priest against a religious order of the highest repute in the Church. That's clear enough, isn't it?"

"But, monseigneur, let me ask you, how is it that you are less disposed to espouse the interests of the priest, whose natural protector you are, than of an order whose aggressive spirit is as well known to you as to myself?"

"I'm not called to judge them; and as for

the spoliation you complain of, it is by no means proved. But I am answerable before the Holy Father and the Catholic world for the public acts of my priests. I have been so incessantly taken to task for my leniency toward you, that I have no fancy for another series of complaints on that score; in short, I am tired to death of them, and mean to have done with them. I was anxious to propose to you a simple and honorable expedient for terminating this matter, with a due regard to the interests of your sister. In so doing, I was acting as bishop and father. If you are resolved to misconstrue my intentions, which are most upright and disinterested, there is but one course left me, which I have been most anxious to avoid, and that is, to avail myself of my spiritual power."

"Your spiritual power, monseigneur! This is the first time I ever heard that a bishop's spiritual power gave him any right over the fortune of his clergy."

"No quibbles here, sir, if you please. Of course, I do not pretend to the right to dispose of your private fortune; but when a priest, in his private life, does acts which tend to compromise the body to which he has the honor to belong, and when, at the same time, a bishop has it in his power, by the exercise of his authority, to obviate a high scandal in the Church, he is fully justified in taking such a step—nay, more, he is bound to do so. Read the Gospel again, and you will see that there are cases in which, when a coat is demanded, it becomes us not only to give up that, but our cloak also."

"Monseigneur, we may argue forever on this point. Now that you have thus set forth your rights over your clergy, I have nothing farther to add."

"Then are you prepared to do as I wish?"

"I repeat what I have already said, monseigneur. I owe you obedience in every thing which pertains to my ministerial office; to that I am bound as a priest. There remain my separate individual rights as a man and a citizen, and you will excuse my remarking that I mean to maintain them."

"I like that! Your rights as a citizen, indeed! Fine rights! Here is another of your charming ideas. I understand the distinction—priest and citizen. However, M. le Curé, I may as well inform you that, unfortunately for you, the episcopate doesn't recognize it. You understand. It is one of those beautiful modern theories bearing on the separation between Church and State. In your church, you would be curé of the parish; outside, M. Julio de la Clavière—landed proprietor, elector, an eligible gentleman—an individual half ecclesiastic, half man of the world. These notions are proscribed at present. Bishops repudiate them utterly. My good sir, the day that you became a priest you parted with your independence. You were invested with priestly dignity, and, forasmuch as the soul is more honorable than the body, and that the more illustrious nature has precedence over the other, in the same way as you speak of

'the *man*' when you refer to the soul clothed with the body, just so you speak of the *priest* in alluding to the Christian raised to the priesthood. Such is your high position. I regret that you have yet to understand it, and that a man like yourself, reputed to be by no means deficient in sense, should be willing to descend from his exalted office to the level of worldly people. You are pursuing a dangerous course in doing so, M. le Curé. If you persevere, take my word for it—the word of a bishop, older and more experienced than yourself—you will come to a bad end."

"I trust in God not, monseigneur. As for the distinction between a man and a priest, I hold it because He has made it. I neither sleep nor feed in my priestly capacity, and this common humanity within me, before I became a priest, had its existence among other humanities outside that ministerial office which I have assumed. That existence unites me to society, involving me in obligations, and assuring to me rights over which the Church has no control. In precisely as the civil magistrate has nothing whatever to do with me as a priest, just so the bishop has nothing whatever to do with me as a citizen. These opinions, monseigneur, appear to me so simple and obvious, that they can not but be adopted. Had the bishop who ordained me held your views, I should have declined an office which I love, but which I can not, for the life of me, regard as destroying my existence as a man and citizen."

"Yet we and all good priests can; hence the priestly garb is never changed for another; hence the tonsure as a mark of consecration. The priesthood are a peculiar people—'*gens sancta, royale sacerdotium*.' But enough of that; I want yes or no from you. Do you mean to drive me to extremities?"

"Monseigneur, you are master; your priests are delivered over to you bound hand and foot. There is no redress from your authority; indeed, I am astonished that your highness should condescend to parley with me. You have colleagues less scrupulous than yourself in similar cases; they crush the poor priest remorselessly. What care they for his harassed life or even his blighted future? What is the outcast to them, with his sole power of making a useless protest? To be plain with you, monseigneur, you are better than your mitred brethren. You suffer your priests to speak before you pass sentence."

"A truce to these sarcasms, sir!—ill becoming a priest; and, since it's high time this conference came to an end, I command you, by that obedience which you have sworn to render to me in all things, to give up this scandalous lawsuit."

"Monseigneur, the obedience which I swore to render to you referred only to my conduct as a pastor, and can not in any sense apply to my private life as an individual, or my family or pecuniary affairs. I should be sorry to oppose a command of my diocesan, but I must follow duty and my conscience before every other consideration."

"In other words, you refuse to yield?"

"Precisely so, monseigneur."

"Very well; we shall see."

CHAPTER IX.

JULIO'S MINISTRY.

JULIO returned home very much out of spirits. In his vexation, the archbishop might do almost any thing; there is but one penalty—a fearful one—for a recalcitrant priest. That penalty makes no note of a blameless private life, nor yet of earnest devotion to severe parish toil. It strikes at the root of every thing to which the poor priest can lay claim; assails his honor, so dear even to the humblest and the most obscure; and deprives him even of life, by robbing him of his miserable pittance. In the judgment of ignorant outsiders, the priest who has been interdicted by his diocesan, no matter for what, whether because he had trodden on the consecrated wafer, or neglected to shave his head, is an outlaw—a convict.

If you have ever had the mournful curiosity to look inside a convict prison, you concluded at once, as you saw the men in chains, and clothed with the garb of disgrace, that you were in the presence of robbers, incendiaries, assassins, or forgers. Just so when the Catholic chances to meet an unhappy priest who has been visited with the thunders of episcopal ire and expelled from his presbytery; he refuses to recognize him any longer in his priestly character, or to salute a man whom he regards as a monster of impiety—a sort of criminal at the galleys, only without the dress.

Hence it will be evident that he must have a soul of iron who is able to hold his own under such circumstances through a long life in the presence of bigoted on-lookers, without relapsing into despair, or cursing God and man.

Would Julio be equal to the emergency?

He knew perfectly well that if there were many bishops who never had recourse to such a measure except in the gravest possible cases, there were others who were prepared to adopt it on the most trivial occasion. The Church, in her gradual decadence, had failed to preserve those ancient laws which protected the priest against the possibly fatal consequences of mistake or ill will. Revolutions have transpired emancipating civil life. Thirty-eight millions in France regard as sacred the existence of the humblest member of the great national family; not a hair of his head can be touched without the law interfering to shield him. Changes have subverted the political power of the clergy, yet in their remissness they have failed to anticipate the day when the priest, whose life is spent in ministering to the poor, and breathing a fever or cholera atmosphere at the dying bed, would cease to exist socially except at the will and pleasure of his ecclesiastical sovereign. They leave him to the tender mercies of an episcopal secretary with a

possible spite against him, or to a bishop utterly opposed to liberal sentiments. They have perpetuated to one class only a condition of slavery, and that class is the priesthood.

Julio could not disguise from himself the fact that his peace, his happiness, his entire future, were at the mercy of the archbishop. Louise could only weep bitterly when he told her the story of his interview. By a cruel chance, her happiness, that happiness which lay in her marriage with Verdalon, and the prospect of which was dearer than life itself, was inseparably associated with the fortune, the robbery of which, backed as it was by the omnipotent influence of the palace, was now to be strenuously opposed.

"My poor brother, I wish I were sufficiently unselfish to be able to say, 'Fling in their faces the money they are so greedy to get! Let us leave this wretched country, where the priest is only an outlaw, where orphans are pillaged in the name of God. Let us go to some free land where we may earn, no matter how, our daily bread. You are highly accomplished, and also a capital linguist; I can teach music; in this way we may escape from our would-be murderers.' But I haven't enough command over myself to be able to say this. You know well that my heart is no longer my own. It is late in the day to tell you this. God is my witness that it is not from any want of frankness that I have omitted hitherto to say as much to you. But our training as women is so peculiar. It seems almost immodest in us to breathe the word Love, even before a brother. Now that I have told you all, however, let me thank you for your efforts to secure to me that dowry, without which, alas! I feel that the gift of my heart would not suffice. Since I have been here, I have reflected a good deal. How short a time it takes to dissipate one's dreams. How different life appears to me now, as compared with my visions of it a few months ago. I have learnt my lesson in the school of misfortune, and, heavy though the blow may be, I can not altogether abandon hope. Do tell me that you would not wish me to do so; tell me that you forgive me for exposing you to a course, the consequence of which to you as priest may prove so terrible."

"My beloved girl, I have a duty to discharge toward you which I hold to be sacred. God's law would require me to defend any orphan whose fate had been intrusted to my care—how much more when that orphan is my sister. It is as well, too, that there should be men ready to defy wrong, however disguised. At present it reaches us through a religious order; and I mean to resist it in its Jesuit garb. True, an archbishop has thought fit to espouse the spoiler's side; but I am not alarmed of his threats. You need not be afraid. I will carry on the struggle to the very end."

"My dear Julio, I never questioned your courage. I only asked myself whether I was not greatly to blame for having exposed you to this war with the strong, and compromised your position with the clerical world, which never for-

gives those who dare to oppose injustice. Had it not been for me, you would have allowed yourself to be robbed most cheerfully, and you would never have dreamt of taking any steps, probably useless ones, against men so utterly cunning and greedy. Oh, what a wretched girl I am!"

"Louise, you are mistaken. Injustice always exasperates me. And had I had only my own interests to look after, I should most probably have acted as I am doing, not so much to recover my fortune, the advantages of which, however, I by no means despise, with the happy independence which they secure, as from a principle of right, and a desire to expose to the world the wrong, practiced on a grand scale under the name of Catholicism. So make yourself happy, dear. Ours is a common object. I am delighted to devote myself to your interests, but, above all, to expose a cause higher even than yours—the cause of God."

Yet these assurances, earnestly as Julio urged them, had little comfort for Louise. Women, with all their warmth of feeling, have more practical good sense than men, whose potent arguments subside often into vague generalities. They are occupied with minor considerations and secondary agencies; they have a child's active memory of little things, and so they reason from what they see.

Now Louise knew well that there were no haters like priests, and that, when these animosities were set in motion by powerful corporations, and backed by subtle ambitions, they knew no bounds. Nor did she fail to infer that the archbishop had not acted spontaneously in the matter; that he would never have sent for Julio to T— except under the influence of some superior interest, associated, therefore, with that of the Jesuits; and so, putting two and two together, she arrived at the terrible conclusion that they were utterly ruined.

Mother Judas had profited by Julio's three or four day's absence to play a very pretty little game at St. Aventin. It was not so much hatred that she felt for him as horror. From the day that he had refused, in his blunt straightforwardness, to sanction one of those pious frauds, intended to rouse popular fanaticism, net large offerings, and fill the sacristy purse, he had been down in her black books; and since she was a lady who was unable to do any thing by halves, she was certain either to worship her curé, making him pass as a saint, or else to hunt him down with pitiless hatred, representing him as the most abandoned of priests.

Now to this last course, it must be owned, she was more likely to take kindly. The pleasures of vengeance are racier to spirits like hers than those of enthusiasm or fanaticism. It is tiresome to be forever deifying the same man, but it is always nice to detest him. Hatred in a bigot's heart is a perennial spring.

Julio was adored in his parish. The generous instincts of the people never ultimately deceive them: they may be led astray for a mo-

ment, but they soon abandon their wild ideas, and return simply and grandly to the truth. The mountaineers of St. Aventin had thoroughly studied their young pastor, so different in his bearing and conduct from the ordinary clerical type. Distinguished in his manners, thoughtful in his words, simple in every thing, familiar with all, to the utmost limits compatible with his dignity, he had won mightily on their frank and half savage natures. They felt that their curé was a man worth having. The old folk especially, the repositories of the traditional history of the place, were his devoted admirers. They would often talk about him among themselves as "a thorough priest," while middle-aged men of judgment and experience contented themselves with calling him their friend. As for the young people, they were enthusiastic on the subject. He was no ordinary man in their judgment. "We love him with all our heart," was their constant testimony.

The only ones against him were Mother Judas's interesting followers. The little store he had set by Lisette's vision naturally made her cherish against him a hatred as bitter as the old lady's. Those silly, fanatical creatures—young idiots with morbid temperaments and bad digestions, whose heated brains roused, instead of ruling, those functions intended to keep the system in a quiet, healthful state, were under the complete dominion of Madame de la Caprède. She was their gospel complete. Who would presume to differ from such an authority?

"That miserable curé!"

It was her only name for Julio; and the indefinite phrase—by no means libelous as it stood, but which left a large margin to the fancy—sounding from morning to night in the ears of her young friends, could have but one effect upon them. Of course they came to the conclusion that Julio was no better than he should be, since the good mother felt compelled to allude to him in such terms. And when they heard their grandfathers, fathers, and brothers speaking of him with love and respect, they set down their opinion as a mere piece of worldly innocence. Church matters, they said, were better understood by the holy mother than by them.

It was on such hopeful intellects as these that she worked, with a view to ruining the reputation of the priest she abhorred. Then, too, besides these young people, she had her intimate acquaintances—her confidants.

A letter which she received from T—the day after Julio's return put her in possession of all the facts with reference to the meditated lawsuit—the indignation of the archbishop, and his efforts to prevent it; the threats of an interdict to which he was most unwilling to be reduced, unless, indeed, the obstinate offender should continue to hold out.

This letter threw her into a perfect delirium of joy.

"So he attacks the Jesuits, does he, that miserable priest!" she said to the beloved Lisette

and the other attendant virgins. "He'll soon see how they'll make him dance!"

"Attack the Jesuits!" In their eyes, it was almost the same as attacking God himself.

"Attack the Jesuits!" said the young lady with a vision.

"Attack the Jesuits!" observed Manette.

"Attack the Jesuits!" struck in Gotille.

"Attack the Jesuits!" ejaculated Marion.

"Why, those good fathers are the saintliest of men; but woe to him who dares to meddle with them. The French Revolution, with the trundling of a royal head on a crimson scaffold, was the result of their expulsion from France. Charles X. fell because he gave up protecting them."

"Then they must be of great importance, mother?"

"Important! I should just think so. They are the vanguard of Catholicism. There would be no such thing as religion without them. It is they who support the Holy Father at Rome. It is to them we owe the immaculate conception of the Virgin."

"Oh, then, dear, dear mother," said Lisette, "do please try and get them to manage the immaculate conception of our sweet Saint Joseph."

"With all my heart, my beloved child. However, when the day comes, they will be inspired for the purpose; and then you will be glorified, and your vision will be spread over the whole earth. Pray without ceasing, daughter; but rest assured that whatever good happens to the Church, a Jesuit will have the doing of it."

"But don't forget Father Basil," said Marion.

"Oh, he is just the forerunner of whoever is destined to take up the case of the spouse of the Virgin. I feel quite clear in my mind that no good can come to the Church without a Jesuit."

"Then I, for one, love them dearly," said Gotille; "and I don't like this miserable curé at all—that I don't."

"We ought not to say we don't like him, Gotille," said Mother Judas, with biting sarcasm in her voice; "charity forbids; but we are quite justified in asking God to deliver us from him."

"Does charity allow that, mother?"

"Oh, most thoroughly."

"He never says a word to me about the Virgin at confession, mother."

"I wanted to speak to him about my vocation," said Manette, "but he wouldn't listen to me. 'Wait till you are twenty,' he said; 'time enough then.'"

"Much he cares about vocations! See what a precious article he has made of his sister—a musician, a singer!"

"Mother, do you know he is always speaking to me about my duty?"

"Yes, mother, and me too: he told me I couldn't be saved if I didn't do my duty; that if I communicated every morning, and confessed twice a week, and didn't do my duty, I couldn't be saved."

"Just what he said to me, mother. He hasn't much comfort for you in the confessional. Oh! that Father Basil were back! He took hold of one's heart, he did. His warm words burn in my ears still: 'My beloved child; 'my dear, dear daughter; 'my angel.' Oh! it is so nice to hear one's self called an angel! As for this one, he just says to you 'Daughter,' quite sharp, and there's an end of it."

"Never mind, my dear children; his days here are numbered. I predict that we shall soon have done with him. Meanwhile, pray the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph to send us a pious, zealous, thorough, self-denying priest, carrying out in his life his relation to the parish, and a true help to the souls of the faithful."

The malicious utterances of Madame de le Caprède, however, had not quite as much influence as she had hoped for. Her snake-in-the-grass proceedings were ineffectual, after all, to alienate the parishioners from their young pastor.

Moreover, when, on his return from T—, he appeared among them as free, as kind, as self-possessed as ever, they meanwhile knowing full well the robbery of which he and his sister had been the victims, he had no difficulty in seeing that their regard for him was daily increasing in warmth. In all disputes arising out of wills in favor of religious orders, the claim of justice is always respected by public opinion. If the testator has no relations, or if those he has are very wealthy, the affair creates but little interest. What matter if they have evaded the law, or had recourse to a pseudo-trustee? It is voted at once all right and proper that people should dispose of their property after death as they choose. Far otherwise, however, is the judgment in the case of penniless heirs, whom chicanery has deprived of their legitimate hopes. Then the general resentment is profound and implacable. Ah! those religious orders, more especially the Jesuits, will pay dear one day for their ill-gotten wealth. A time will come when any service they may have rendered to the cause of education or charity will be ignored utterly in the popular reckoning. They will perish unlamented. The people will take vengeance on them for their robberies, and so execute the judgment of the Most High.

A week had elapsed since Julio's return. Louise trembled at each arrival of the postman, lest some authoritative mandate should launch the fatal blow.

A letter with a bishop's crest upon it did indeed arrive at St. Aventin. The poor girl carried it, in a panic, to her brother.

"Here it is!" she exclaimed. "Come at last!"

"Quite mistaken, dear," said Julio; "look at the post-mark. It comes from * * *. These are not the arms of an archbishop."

"God be praised!" she cried.

Julio's letter was as follows:

"You are terribly remiss, my dear abbé. Your letters are longer than ever coming, and I'm so fond of having them. You know we are brothers: it is so pleasant to hold confidential interchange with thoughtful priests, that I rejoice in your much-esteemed friendship. I expect to be at Luchon part of the summer season.

"There are only two places in the world thoroughly to my liking—Paris and the Pyrenees: Paris, the centre of every intellectual movement of the age; the Pyrenees, that vast garden of perpetual foliage, planted by the hand of God to recreate the body and refresh the soul.

"I need hardly tell you that, as soon as possible after my arrival, my highness will pay a visit to your highness.

"Don't think that I'm joking. You are far more of a bishop than I am. You are working wonders, they tell me, at St. Aventin. A lady, in high position here, combining the most unimpeachable character and brilliant intellect—a rarity in this episcopal city of mine—has just returned from Luchon full of your parochial triumphs. You are bringing back the Golden Age, they say. Your faithful are Christians of the primitive Church.

"Do tell me how you manage. Enlarge on the theme elaborately and minutely. Your letters are the only ones I find short.

"Our curés succeed so little. It is all they can manage if they are able to say, after twenty years' work, that there is as much religion in their people as when they began. And yet they are not wanting in piety themselves. I feel this to be a grievous state of things, I do assure you. Since God has enabled you to do better, tell me the secret.

"It would appear that you, too, have had your miracle at St. Aventin. I can not say that I congratulate you very warmly on that. Take care—Salette and Lourdes will quarrel with you.

"I am quite sure that there has been a miracle in your parish, but it has been effected by the spirit of the Gospel penetrating among a people asleep in their sins and ceremonial routine. Under God, you yourself have been the wonder-worker.

"To the winds or to the flames with this letter! written with the broken stump of a pen, and in a careless style, reflecting little credit on a bishop. And, I implore you, never refer to our correspondence for fear of the Jews. I am anxious to die in peace with the congregation of the Holy Office devoted to the detection of heretical depravity; and you, sir—you certainly smell a little of the fagot.

"Adieu, my very dear abbé.

"Ever yours, etc.,

"* * * *, Bishop of —."

To which Julio replied:

"St. Aventin, August, 1860.

"It is very good of you, dear monseigneur, to think still of the exile of St. Aventin. Accord-

ing to present appearances, I shall not be left long at peace. Possibly you are ignorant of a certain little matter—my sister and I are at law. Guess with whom?—why, with the reverend Jesuits. They have taken what I consider the great liberty of helping themselves to the entire property of my good aunt, by means of a pseudo-trustee; so I have taken the considerably smaller liberty of protesting against their proceedings. The Archbishop of T——, who has his own views of the protection he owes to his priests, has called upon me to relinquish my opposition, representing it as my duty to do so, on the ground of canonical obedience.

"You may easily guess my reply to such an outrageous argument. So, you see, you are nearer the mark than you thought in saying that I smell of the fagot. Only think of attacking the Jesuits! what a horrible crime! What won't they do to make me smart for it!"

"But to quit this unpleasant subject. You ask me how I have set to work in my endeavors really to Christianize this people. You wish to know my plan. It is very simple. I have taken precisely the opposite course to that generally adopted by priests.

"Their first maxim is, that you ought to appeal to the feelings of the people: for *feelings* I put *reason*.

"Their second is, that one ought to preach up devotional practices: for devotional practices read simply *duty*.

"Instead of advocating the Jewish notion, 'Pavete ad sanctuarium meum,' I have taught my Christians that each of their hearts is the true sanctuary of God; that the material Church is but a general abode, sheltering each of the faithful, himself being the real temple. I have explained to them that the parish bell is only a great clock-bell; that it has no virtue in itself—least of all that of driving away storms, since it often kills ringers by attracting the lightning.

"They have been quick enough at perceiving that religion is no mere heaping up of acts of ritualism—the charm of the Middle Ages. They have been told that Cæsar and St. Peter would be very much astonished if they visited the Rome of the present day. The former would be at a loss to understand the language spoken on the ruins of the Forum, while the latter would certainly be inquisitive as to the religion of the Romans. My parishioners are wonderfully well up in the history of the early ages of the Church. You may question them as to the Christian basilic, and the love-feasts after the Eucharistic celebration: they will tell you all about them. I have interested them in the narrative of the great doings of their fathers in the faith. They are as proud of these achievements as peers are of their inherited nobility.

"I simply preach to them the old law of Moses, reiterated by our Lord, 'Love God, and love your brother.' They all have seats in the church. Decorum and freedom, those two essentials of common life, are the order of the day. Every one is pleased, and continues his attendance.

"My mountaineers are born musicians. It is not uncommon to hear them singing in parts as they return from their work, their favorite songs being the Church canticles. Our young lads form one choir, our young girls another. I have chosen a few very simple ones, and composed a few more. Of these they are very proud; they call them the St. Aventin canticles.

"You will, of course, understand that in my hymns you don't hear of people dying of grief that they can not die; nor are my young parishioners required to state musically that their heart is consuming in desire, and exhausting itself in sighs.

"In a word, my purpose has been to solve the problem how to adapt Christianity to the exigencies and characteristics of our day. If I have succeeded with these simple rustics, you may have the same success every where. This, then, is the grand lever with which I work. The system will inevitably be accepted, and warmly too, by the new generation. The old men are dying out year after year, like falling autumn leaves, carrying away with them their prejudices, their ignorance, their dry routine. With them the religious future has no concern; nor is it embosomed in the midst of a few female enthusiasts, who altogether misapprehend it, and give the people so false an idea of it as to run the risk of effectually disgusting them.

"The entire future of a parish is in the hands of the young—those already married, or just about to be. On them I have worked. I felt that my wisdom would be to combine them strongly, after having gathered them round me; discarding for either purpose those factitious means by which they are vehemently urged one minute, and left, the next, to their struggles and dissatisfaction.

"I have often preached upon marriage. I have openly advocated early unions. In fact, I'm the lover's patron saint.

"Your good parish priests are singular moralists. They would convert the human heart into an article of polished marble. This charming theory—an admirable one for angels—its authors themselves are very careful to be the first to demonstrate as impracticable. In the seclusion of the monastery the most rigorous asceticism is practiced to bring about this happy state of things, but all in vain. How mad, then, to hope for it in the unrestraint of every-day life.

"Just see what actually happens. You throw a man into a grave swathed in grave-clothes. He bestirs himself in his living tomb, eases away the heavy covering, breaks his chains, clothes himself in his shroud, regains his own home, and says he has had enough of it. His experience is now complete. Your priests will hear from him one day—the day of their dying agony—not before.

"I have taken him by the hand with a hearty, earnest 'Veni foras.' Air, life, liberty, love, under the eye of God, in obedience to His law, and development, under the quiet influences of His providence and grace, for all those wondrous

faculties with which He has endowed His creatures.

"You see, monseigneur, that between these two theories there is a great gulf fixed. But do not tire yourself with urging my plan upon the malcontents; they would never understand it. Men who have been petrified from infancy into a devout belief in a mighty theocracy, and the supremacy of priests over every thing and every one in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in the water under the earth; who think themselves a race altogether apart, a people selected for the blissful purpose of chastising the nations and trampling them under foot; men who are saturated with mediævalism through all the pores of their skin, and who hold in abomination what they are pleased to style mock modern civilization—a term well chosen, as it happens, since it forbids to the priest the old system of working—how would such men square themselves to your views? Bishop though you are, monseigneur, you would soon smell of the fagot.

"Leave the doomed generation to themselves. 'Sinite mortuos sepelire mortuos.' If you can manage in the course of your probably long episcopate (for you are young as yet) to gather round you a little college of disciples, of real priests, who will understand their day and be understood by it, you will have initiated a great, and the only practical measure.

"But to accomplish even that much you will require courage; you will have to close your seminary. The monkish mind is carried away with those institutions, the idea of which is admirable, and which are calculated to render vast services to the Church, did they but remain what the Council of Trent intended them to be, mere theological universities. This has, however, been lost sight of; the synagogue is uppermost in them, characterized by the formalism of doctors of law.

"That great step once taken, turn your palace into a school, with yourself for a master, and the young candidates for the priesthood your children and scholars. Train them in the text of the Epistles, and in all those liberal studies necessary now for the well-educated man. Let them have plenty of books; let them attend professors' lectures in the town; let them go into society; and when you have thus for some years tested the reality of their call to the priesthood, under a system of most thorough liberty, send them back into the world for two or three years to choose a wife, and whenever that choice is satisfactory to yourself, in accordance with the wise provision of the Eastern Church, admit them to the priesthood, and appoint them to the most important posts in your diocese. Hitherto the Western Church has thought fit to invest her priests with greater prestige by compelling them to celibacy. That system has had its advantages. A different discipline, however, is needed now.

"By these methods you will resuscitate your clergy. Once embark them in that natural path from which the theories of the mystics have

turned them aside, and they will follow it with eagerness and success. Their experience of it will be better than mine, for it will be unattended by suffering.

"Meanwhile, as you are afraid of the Sacred College, and have no fancy to be suspected at Rome, I conclude that you will pass by my suggestions as utopian dreams.

"And not without reason; for what can one man do against a movement loud roaring as many waters, and which is dragging the clergy on to an open rupture with modern society? Even a bishop, who had the good sense to say to these fools, 'You are hurrying on to your ruin!' would be mercilessly proscribed for his pains; they would clamor fiercely at Rome for his degradation.

"We will talk over these matters more at length when you pay me your promised visit. You must tell me what you know, and I presume you will have much interesting matter to divulge; while I, for my part, will tell you what I have learnt in my hours of solitary reflection. What a gloomy prospect awaits the clergy!

"Believe me ever, etc., etc., JULIO.

"P.S.—During the whole of last May I had a fat old monk billeted upon me—a gracious man from the archbishop, for the pulpit enlightenment and edification of my flock. He has got through an immense amount of talk, soiled an immense amount of linen, and drunk an immense amount of Bordeaux. I have had to undo all that he was good enough to do. However, the story will keep till you come. He is the gentleman who is hawking about now through the religious world the vision of Lisette Cabarous. He is positively anxious to associate his name with that farce. Poor, poor puffing monks! they are tremendous hands at making demonstrations. Alas! alas! their day is drawing on."

CHAPTER X.

A NEW VERGÉS.

ON Saturday, the 29th of August, 1860, one of the hottest mornings in that summer, every thing promised a day, the delight of tourists, available for the longest excursions and the highest mountain climbs. A fresh and all but sharp breeze was carrying before it the last lingering misty vapors on the edges of the rocky projections, which, like flying buttresses, sustained the giant mass of the central ridge. Glaciers were gleaming in the earliest morning rays. The deep valleys lay still in that cool abundant shade which covers the villages till the sun has described a long upward arc in the fair southern sky.

The latest meltings of the snow had irrigated the mountain sides, and the huge granite heights were distilling a thousand cataracts, here in silver lines of peaceful flow, there in prattling bubbling brooks, or again in rushing roaring torrents, whose course was so swift that no eye

could follow them as they thundered downward and shook the earth in their descent.

In the distance, over the vast hollow, channeled out by the impetuous Garonne, you might have observed, had you mounted one of those peaks which stand out toward the plain, that the atmosphere was already glowing into red, while the leaden sky was rimmed on the horizon with a purple band.

A traveler, with a small valise in his hand, was waiting on the road from Luchon to T—— for the diligence, announced to start at five o'clock in the morning. He kept consulting his watch with manifest impatience, now facing the road toward T——, again climbing the steep sides of the valley, clearly to distract his mind and kill time. He was one of the mountain curés, and exhibited on the occasion in question a strictly orthodox clerical costume—soutane, bands, cincture, and broad-brimmed hat lapped over, all complete. Yet the nineteenth century man was evident in this disguise; he wore what proper priests would call a revolutionary dress, that is to say, trowers, which they are in the habit of exchanging for knee-breeches, according to the old style, a venerable indication of their freedom from modern ideas. His large shoes, stylish and well-blacked though they were, marked the Pyrenean.

Meanwhile the lumbering vehicle arrived at last, creaking on its springs, and harnessed to those lanky, bony hacks, with their foaming sides, which are accustomed to drag out, in that miserable service, the remnants of their strength.

"Have you a seat free?"

"Not one, M. le Curé."

"Not one! impossible; stow me any where you please, near you on your seat if you like, or in with the luggage. I have an appointment at T——."

"Yes; and then the administration will be down upon me with a fine."

"All right, I'll pay it;" and the strong hearty curé hoisted himself into the banquette, where some young men squeezed themselves together a little to make room for him.

"There's a stalwart cherry-looking fellow," said some commercial traveler inside. "He has the frame of a Hercules. Fine men these mountaineers are. Did you notice his bright eye, arched nose, and expressive mouth?"

"That I did! He'd make a better gendarme than priest."

"These splendid-looking men are not so commonly met with. If I were the government, I would send a recruiting officer to inspect the seminaries, and every young fellow I met with of his style I'd pack off to the army."

"You would, would you? and, pray, how about liberty?"

"Humbug to that! Every man is cut out for his proper work, that's all I know. Make the rickety fellows priests and monks if you will—all the better; but healthy chaps like him—bah! it's absurd!"

During this little impromptu on social economy, the text of the discourse, accommodated as best he could be, was quietly engaged with his breviary.

When the diligence had reached the suburb behind the bridge of the Garonne, the travelers had to alight, and the curé was obliged to enter the town on foot. It was eleven o'clock, and the mountaineer who had risen at daybreak was prodigiously hungry. He went to a restaurant in the Place du Capitole, ordered a breakfast, which he washed down with a capital bottle of wine, took his time over the meal, rested, paid the bill, and sallied forth.

Thence bending his steps toward the theatre, he entered the main street leading to the cathedral and the centre of the town.

The ground floor of the third house on the left was taken up with the large shop of Audran, the celebrated armorer of T——. Thither the curé proceeded; and, addressing the shopman, asked to be shown a good, substantial revolver.

The proprietor, who was in the little room behind, came forward.

"You would like an expensive article, M. le Curé?"

"Not exactly that. I don't want to pay a high figure for it. I only want something substantial. I am a mountain curé, and occasionally have to be out late."

"I understand."

And, taking a fine revolver, with four barrels, from a glass show-case, he said,

"Here is just the thing you require, M. le Curé. It's of the very best kind of useful weapons. The stock is unornamented; and I can guarantee the article. You see my name upon it."

"How much?"

"You'll perhaps think it a little dear—ninety francs is the lowest price."

"The lowest price?"

"Yes, M. le Curé, the lowest price."

The curé took the weapon, turned it over and over, and tried how he could use it.

"With this weapon," he said, "one might easily terrify a man."

"Ay, and a good lot of 'em too, especially when one of your figure is holding it."

"Then I could?"

"I should rather think so."

"You won't lower your price?"

"I can't."

"Then I'll take it."

And the curé, producing a leathern purse, tied with thick strings, paid the money.

"Your name, sir, if you please? We generally enter on our books the names of any gentlemen to whom we sell fire-arms."

"Very good; it's a wise precaution against assassins. Jean Loubère, curé of . . ."

And he was on the point of leaving, when, turning round again, he said to the armorer,

"On reflection, I should be glad to have it loaded with ball. That will be in the bargain, of course?"

"Don't mention it, M. le Curé: shall I put a cap on?"

"Yes, please."

And the weapon was loaded and returned. The curé slipped it carefully into his trowers' pocket and left the shop, followed by a gracious inclination of the head from the shopman.

"And now we'll go," he said to himself, "and pay a morning visit to our friend Monseigneur le Cricq."

One o'clock was striking on the great bell of St. Stephen's. The streets were deserted; and the farther the stranger with the revolver penetrated into the aristocratic quarter of the town, the fewer passers-by he met. Soon, however, he reached a little street full of shops. Through this he walked with a slow, steady step. Then turning to the right, along another of a similar character, he knocked at a large doorway leading into a court-yard. The gate opened, and he advanced to the porter's lodge.

"Good morning, Florentin."

"Ah! it's you, is it, M. Loubère?"

"Yes, my friend. How are you?"

"Very well, thank you, M. Loubère."

The Florentine was well known to him, being the son of the seminary porter. The abbé had known him for four years, when he was little more than a child. So they were on familiar terms.

"Is any one in the palace?"

"They are all gone out: there's only monseigneur in his study."

"Ah! very well. It's with him that my business is."

"Shall I go and announce you?"

"No need for that, my lad. A country curé like me has small ideas of etiquette. I know the staircase."

"As you please, M. le Curé."

"Listen a minute. I want to have a long conversation with monseigneur. If any one should happen to call, please say that his highness is particularly engaged. You understand—we are friends."

"As for that, M. le Curé, no one is likely to come just now. It's too hot; besides, it's just the time when every body takes a nap. Then, too, we never see priests here on a Saturday. How have you managed?"

"I shall be able to get back home to-night."

"You look very red, M. Loubère."

"Yes, with the heat;" adding, with a sly smile, "perhaps with a good glass of wine."

"You always were pleased to be merry, sir."

"Always, my lad. Good-by till I see you again."

The priest walked on in the shade, under the wall of the palace, ascended several outside steps, entered a large hall, and prepared to mount the staircase. Reaching the first floor, he found an antechamber, the door of which was half open: he entered, and fastened it inside, turning the key twice. Then, crossing the great drawing-room, he took the precaution, as he passed out of it at the other end, to close

that door also behind him, securing it in a similar manner. He next reached the archbishop's bedroom—an immense apartment, where Julio had witnessed the dying struggle of Cardinal de Flammarens, and secured the lock as before.

He was now at the door of the archbishop's study. In spite of a wild beating at his heart which he could not repress, he knocked gently.

A harsh voice from within immediately summoned him to enter.

Obeying, he found the archbishop seated in a large easy-chair near his library-table, on which books, papers, and letters were heaped in disordered profusion. As he was on the farther side of the room, with his face toward the door, he saw the curé of —— immediately on his entrance, and recognized him at once.

"Monseigneur, I have the honor—"

"What's the matter? What do you want?" said the archbishop, in an abrupt and haughty tone.

"I came, monseigneur—"

"I have nothing to say to you. Go back to your parish, and wait for my orders there."

Loubère continued, in the same key,

"But, monseigneur—"

"There's no 'but' in the matter, sir, I tell you. I have nothing to say to you whatever. Be off! Good morning."

During this dialogue the archbishop had remained seated, while the priest was standing.

"Do you really mean that, monseigneur?"

"Really mean it? Yes, sir. Go, I say, or . . ." And, rising as he spoke, he looked as if he meant to make for the fireplace and pull the bell.

Loubère saw the movement, and, cunning as a hunter surprised by a lion before he expected him, he sprang toward the chimney-piece, and, snatching a large knife from his pocket, cut the bell-rope.

"What, sir! You threaten me with violence to my face, do you? That's outrageous. You are suspended *ipso facto*."

"Ah! my good archbishop, that's your tone, is it? And this is the way you receive your priests? This is the kind of rule to which your beloved fellow-laborers are subjected? And now be good enough, in your turn, to listen to me."

Then, producing from its receptacle, after tucking up his soutane, the flashing revolver, he cocked it with a snap, and showing it to the archbishop, observed quietly,

"You see the *ultima ratio*. Now you will have the goodness to sit down."

And, taking another easy-chair which happened to be opposite, he continued,

"All resistance on your part will be useless. These doors, locked inside, separate you from any one who might chance to rush to your rescue. I told Florentin that I wanted to have a long conversation with you, and he has promised to let no one in. I learned from him that every body had gone out. Your servants are in

their hall, or are having a sleep. You and I are alone. Do you hear me, sir?—quite alone!”

As he said it, the hazel eye of the Pyrenean flashed ominously.

The archbishop had come to the conclusion that the poor priest was affected in his brain, and that he himself was face to face with a raging madman. His position was eminently critical. He tried to soothe his unbidden guest.

“Very well, my friend, let us have a little conversation. I shall be most happy. It was very wise of you to fasten the doors, as we shall be less likely to be disturbed. But put away that weapon, to which neither you nor I are accustomed. Perhaps an unforeseen accident—in your excited state—which you might one day be sorry for . . .”

“Ah! just so. I’m your friend now, am I? You would like to have a chat with me, would you? The most illustrious and most reverend Le Cricq, archbishop of T——, successor of his eminence Cardinal de Flammarens, is ready to condescend to a confidential *tête-à-tête* with a poor mountain curé. Wonders will never cease!”

“Just that; so we understand one another thoroughly now, my friend. Well, what shall we talk about? Ah! yes, of course. Your parish—is it going on well? I suppose you left it this morning.”

“Enough of that nonsense, monseigneur. I have not taken this stern resolve to talk or hear rubbish. I see from your tone that you are afraid, and you have good cause to be. Perhaps you thought that a feverish attack of madness had impelled me to attack you. Reassure yourself on that point. I am no lunatic, like Vergés, who assassinated the unfortunate Sibour for having, against his conscience, proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. I have all my faculties about me as much as you, except in so far as I am full of what has placed us in this strange position. However, I have resolved upon the course I shall take. The very first and faintest cry for help from you, and you see this!”

And again he displayed his revolver.

“It has two barrels for you, and two for me—that’s all.”

“Perhaps he’s not mad, after all,” said the archbishop to himself; “in that case, things look alarming.”

“Now listen to me,” said Loubère. “During the very short time that you have been archbishop you have sent me to three parishes. I have had nothing else to do but run up and down mountains and valleys, north and south, in your diocese. In my parish of . . . I offended the Countess of B——, who was pleased to imagine that I was not over head and ears in love with the Jesuits. You deprived me of my charge, and degraded me by sending me as curate to St. Bertrand. The brothers of the school there denounced me as not holding the Immaculate Conception. You punished me with a fortnight’s retreat in the Seminary, and ban-

ished me to the mountains. I got on very well with the rustics in the valley of Lys, and you have driven me from there because you said I was wanting in zeal, that my church was all in disorder, and a lot more stuff of that kind. Now you threaten to march me back to L——, because it has been represented to you that I am too intimate with the mayor’s family. Very good. Now I will tell you what I’ve done. I have paid my trifling debts there; I have just purchased a revolver, which has cost me ninety francs—ninety francs, you understand. I have ten francs over, which I mean to leave on my person for whoever will dig my grave. I have come here with the deliberate purpose of ridding the clergy of a detestable tyrant like you, and myself, at the same time, of life. Come, monseigneur, are you ready to die? I am—quite.”

These words, slowly uttered by that terrible-looking man, who had wonderfully recovered his coolness, and who spoke with all the haughtiness of a superior to a prince of the Church, froze up the blood of the wretched archbishop.

“You tremble, do you? Then you are not ready? Down on your knees, sir, this instant!”

The archbishop did not stir, but murmured to himself, “In manus tuas, Domine.”

“Down on your knees, I tell you: not before me, but before God.”

It would have been madness to hasten the fatal moment. The archbishop resigned himself, and, turning toward an exquisite ivory crucifix in a recess, on a stand of black velvet, knelt in prayer.

“May God forgive you, brother!”

“Well, then, listen to me. You have neither acted as a bishop nor as a man toward me. You have trodden me under your feet as dirt; you have torn savagely at your victim, like a beast of prey. I mean to show you that I am better than you are. Attend to what I am going to say and do. I will spare your life. I shall look you in your study, and blow my head off in your great drawing-room. They’ll rush up stairs at the report, to find my brains scattered about over the furniture and walls; the weapon in my hand will be proof positive that I have destroyed myself, and, in any case, you would never be suspected. That’s not the way in which bishop’s murder; they take longer about it. Meanwhile, monseigneur, this is on one condition. Among all the victims of your administration, there is one who is well worthy of universal admiration. He is no desperado like me; he would never say a harsh word against his bishop. I know the disgraceful way in which you have treated him. A mutual friend, by a happy accident, enlightened me on the whole matter. You had the impudence to abuse your position as bishop to try and compel him to give up his large fortune to the greedy maw of those charming children of Loyola. I know that he bravely asserted his rights, but he is still threatened with your vengeance. I saw him only a few days ago. He never mentioned

your name but with the utmost respect, and, though I told him that I knew every thing, I could not elicit from him a syllable of complaint against you. I admired him for it, and secretly vowed that I would avenge him. So now swear to me before God and this sculptured Christ" (and he pointed to the crucifix) "that you will leave that excellent priest in peace; that you will no longer be the torment of that noble-hearted man; and, that solemn oath taken, I give you sufficient credit to believe that you will never break it, and on that understanding grant you your life. You will owe it to the exemplary character of Julio de la Clavière, of whom you have been the wanton and pitiless persecutor. Swear, now, in the presence of this crucifix."

"Yes, I swear most solemnly," said the archbishop, trembling. "I pledge my word—in all sincerity."

"Then rise, monseigneur; I trust your promise, and I shall carry with me into another world the comfort of having ended my life with a good action."

And, hastening to the door,

"Farewell, now, monseigneur; pray for him who will be your victim. Possibly my blood will not have been shed in vain. Henceforth you may perhaps be kinder to your poor clergy."

Meanwhile, the conviction that the unhappy man was bent on destroying himself brought back something like consciousness to the heart of the miserable archbishop, who up to that moment had been more dead than alive. He was not altogether bad at the bottom, and this wild generosity on the part of the man who had spared the life of a prelate he detested for the sake of entailing on him a promise to be merciful to his priest, touched him deeply.

With a resolve sudden as lightning, he determined to try and save him. As he was still a hale old man, he hurried after him, and so far succeeded in overtaking him as to prevent him from shutting the drawing-room door.

"Leave me, monseigneur! leave me! leave me, monseigneur!" he shrieked out, wildly, as he tried to aim the barrel of the revolver at his own forehead.

Alas! he was too successful. The archbishop, in despair, saw the unfortunate man fall at his feet, bathed in blood.

CHAPTER XI.

NECESSARY PRELIMINARIES IN A LAWSUIT.

A SERVANT in state livery knocked at the entrance of the Maison de l'Inquisition, and asked to see Father Boniface. He was the bearer of the following note:

"REVEREND FATHER,—I should be very much obliged if you would send me, by the bearer, the name of your advocate in the pending trial. I want it for private purposes con-

nected with an object which lies very near to my heart.

"Excuse my troubling you in your pious retirement. Pray for one who is ever lamenting her deadness of soul and her sluggish progress to perfection. Receive, etc., etc.,

"COUNTESS OF ———."

The man brought back to his mistress a slip of paper bearing the name of "M. Delpas, advocate, Rue du Musée," with a thousand thanks from the reverend father.

The countess had foreseen, with true woman's wit, that it would never answer to expose Madelette to the risk of a sudden cross-examination at the trial, and that it would be wiser to have her thoroughly instructed for her part. She had already succeeded in persuading her that her vexation with Tournichon had perverted her judgment, and that, there being no possible doubt as to the wishes of Madame de la Clavière, it was her duty to retract all she had said in a moment of passion. We may remark in passing, that, thanks to the subtle equivocation to which she had accustomed herself, this fine lady, while she was most undoubtedly deceiving the peasant, was deceiving herself as well, and never imagined that she was for a moment infringing the law against false witness.

Thinking that it would be as well if Madelette saw the Jesuit counsel in order to get thoroughly accustomed to him, she took her in her carriage to the address that had just been brought.

M. Delpas was perhaps, on the whole, the least eloquent and the least famous member of the bar at T——. He was shrewder, however, than any of his brethren, and had the most reliable practice of any. In choosing his profession, he felt that he required considerable influence to push him forward among a host of competitors, some of whom were rendered conspicuous by the possession of a name already famous, and others by extraordinary talent, which always commands success. Sly as a fox, and ready as a monkey at contrivances, he was cunning enough to throw himself into the arms of the Jesuits at the very outset of his career, before even he had held his first brief. At the same time, as a natural consequence, he was admitted into the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a powerful fraternity at T——, with large resources at their command.

He had exhibited on every occasion, and under every possible circumstance, an unbounded devotion to the Jesuits. Indeed, he was a species of juvenile saint, and had been, when at college, a "Chevalier de Marie." Such highly creditable antecedents led the holy fathers to cry him up warmly as a model young man. "Look at Delpas," they would say, "how well he has got on!"

And they did more than this; for, three or four years after his entrance at the bar, they procured him a rich wife, in this wise:

The Provincial put on his hat and paid an afternoon visit to the lady superior of the Con-

vent of the *Sacré-Cœur*, at whose establishment all the young ladies of the upper classes were educated.

"Mother," he said, "allow me to give you a hint with reference to something I should be glad if you would do for me. The fact is, I want a young heiress. She must be very pious and very rich, and, if possible, of an influential family. As for beauty—well, we won't be unreasonable on that score. I have the finest young fellow in T— ready for her—a perfect saint—the advocate Delpas, one of our sons, and among our most devoted friends, a man on whom you and I can confidently reckon."

The behest was obeyed, and M. Delpas's matrimonial felicity secured. Ten months after he married *Eléonore Bertal*, the only daughter of a former chief justice in the Imperial Court—a young lady with a very unhandsome face, but a very handsome fortune, and who became afterward the most intriguing and dangerous woman in T—. The precious pair had been formed by the Jesuits; a reverend father had blessed their union; and, thanks to the promised support of the society, the influence of his father-in-law, who hoped to close, as a good Christian, the life he had devoted to the pleasures of the world—thanks, also, to the ceaseless activity of his wife—the barrister found himself rapidly pushed to the front, and in the enjoyment of a considerable practice.

To tell the truth, his addresses were heavy, his delivery unendurable, and his style rambling and tedious; but then he had a clever way of complicating matters, tormenting the bench, and setting himself up as an advocate whose catholic conscience was so sensitive that nothing in the world would ever induce him to undertake a case of the justice of which he was not fully convinced. In a word, he managed so cleverly that the plain straightforward judges were utterly outwitted by this juggler of the first water, and almost invariably settled the matter by giving him his case. He seldom showed himself in the criminal courts, where the forensic eloquence required was rather beyond his mark; but in civil cases he was in great request.

Madelette, seated by the side of a real live countess, in a real live countess's carriage, was fairly unhinged in her upper story by such a high distinction. The lady herself, as soon as she had set her down at the advocate's office, returned home. She had done her part; M. Delpas did his; and Madelette took her leave, after a brief conversation, fully persuaded that in retracting all she had said to Verdeler, she was but following the dictates of her conscience.

According to an old custom not yet rooted out of the provinces, it is quite an allowable thing to tamper with justice. Tournichon, the only person who appeared in the matter, took full advantage of the privilege; while the Jesuits, who were most careful not to compromise themselves in the least degree, availed themselves of their influence with those of their penitents who had any chance whatever of being

brought in contact with the judges employed in the case.

So every thing was in train as regarded this important business. The *Star of Languedoc*—a sheet inspired by the *Catholic Atlas*, and secured by the Jesuits and the clerical party in the interests of the temporal power in the South—duly instructed the public to the effect that the coming action was but an outburst of Liberalism; a revolutionary attack upon a venerable order, distinguished by the most unremitting devotion to the sovereign pontiff. It farther had the audacity to insinuate that the revolutionary agents had got hold of an accomplice in the lawsuit—a miserable priest, not overgifted with intelligence, and unhappily notorious at T—for a wild pamphlet, and still wilder utterances from time to time, who, however, had escaped, from a false leniency, the chastisement he so richly merited.

Since the affair of *Léotade*, no lawsuit had so much engrossed public opinion in the South as the present action of *La Clavière vs. Tournichon*. The whole country round was full of it—so strong was the feeling here for, there against, the Jesuits.

A week before it came on, it formed the one subject of conversation at social gatherings. The public, the Liberal citizens, the professors, the bar, and artists generally, were, to a man, with Julio. Even the magistrates, cautious and reserved though they naturally were, could not disguise their sympathy for the orphans. Meanwhile, the aristocracy, the convents, the bigots of the various parishes, the ecclesiastical dignitaries, the ambitious, and the fanatical among the inferior clergy, backed the Jesuits.

Julio was most unwilling to appear before a civil tribunal, still more so that Louise should have to do the same. So he arranged with Verdeler that they should both return to St. Aventin, neither of them being in a position to further, in any appreciable way, the cause about to be tried.

Verdeler had carefully subpoenaed the curé of *La Clavière*, an indispensable witness in case Madelette refused to give detailed evidence against the Jesuits; in addition to which, he had had another interview with the old servant, who had promised to tell the whole truth when the time came.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRIAL.

THE trial was appointed to come off on Monday, September 6th, 1860. On that day the approaches to the court-house were thronged with people seeking admission. The importance of the point at issue was evident to all—"If the will were canceled, what a blow it would be to the Jesuits!" The real question was not a matter of some five or six thousand francs, more or less, passing into the hands of the company,

but the condign punishment of an unprincipled spoliation.

The interests of Julio and Louise were represented by Verdalon. Even the largest country towns are little better than villages in one respect. Every thing that's going on is known to and related by every body. Gossip is nothing short of a positive epidemic. In spite of the secrecy which Verdalon and Louise had maintained with reference to their mutual attachment, it was generally understood that the advocate—whose professional reputation was very high—was pleading, in this particular case, for the girl he loved; hence there was a sort of romantic interest in his success. The general belief was that the orator would excel himself, and that his heart—that great master of eloquence—would supply his most burning aspirations.

The young men of T—— had not forgotten Julio's preaching. They came to the courthouse from that sympathy with liberty, honesty, and love, which would have taken them any where where these or any one of these interests were at stake. Especially were they allured by their hatred to the Jesuits, in their judgment the worst of transgressors, the inexorable plotters, forever arresting the progress of modern development in the direction of social amelioration or public good.

So the interior of the hall was the theatre of a vast throng in wild dispute. Two worlds were present—the one impassioned and implacable, bent, for generations back, on the bloody task of avenging the crime of heresy, and lashed to the utmost impatience in its impotent wrath by painful experience of its powerlessness; the other smiling at the future, and inflicting on the worshipers of the past the unendurable chastisement of compelling them to see growing up under their eyes, day by day, that modern civilization which is the object of their most persistent anathemas.

The representatives of the former class in the excited throng were old Tournichon, M. Delpas, and Madelette. Behind them was a packed crowd, collected by the Jesuits, and prepared to support frantic applause to any amount at every available occasion.

Auguste Verdalon as advocate, and the curé of La Clavière as witness, represented the other side. They came to ask that justice might be done to two orphans, and to unveil to Europe a system of spoliation practiced by an order whose ambition was utterly beyond the reach of law. And they had with them the sympathies of the numerous Liberals who were present that day, expecting an act of justice, and a bold flagellation of those who had dared to trample on the rights of property.

Whatever might be the importance of the verdict to those immediately concerned, it assumed colossal interest when its possible results were taken into consideration. The point at issue was whether an entire religious order was to be convicted of a disgraceful act in the pres-

ence of the civilized world, or whether it was to be held innocent on that charge.

Verdalon's address was crushing to the Jesuit cause. He showed up Tournichon as a species of fag, who had arrived at a moderate competence by his practice of acting as a go-between in transactions similar to that under consideration; a man of most ordinary attainments, whom the Jesuits had secured as a clever jackal in the acquisition of properties. They had for the last ten years been forcing him upon the society of Madame de la Clavière, a lady who saw very little of the world, on the influential recommendation of Father Briffard, her confessor. There was no old friendship, no family tie to account for his all but daily visits to her house during the whole of that period. Who could doubt, therefore, that some powerful interest must have been at work to allure him from his family night after night, and from the society of those of his own position and age, to play cards with an invalid lady who conversed very little, and had none of those amusements to offer which business men require after a hard day's work?

Then he called Madelette forward—a more than simple woman, who had left her mountain home when she was quite a child, and had been in no other situation besides that at Madame de la Clavière's. The Jesuits had hoped, he said, by the unremitting perseverance of Father Briffard, to obtain a will in Tournichon's favor. The old lady, however, with all her weakness of character, was devotedly fond of Louise and Julio, to both of whom she had been a second mother, so that at any moment, and especially in the prospect of death, she might very possibly revert to her old will, yield to the dictates of nature, and leave her nephew and niece the property, which she felt she had no right to bestow upon its present claimants. That this supposition was accurate the evidence went to prove; and Verdalon, detailing what had transpired at the interview between Madelette, himself, and the curé of La Clavière, an unimpeachable witness, exhibited the former as exasperated beyond measure at her petty remuneration, and divulging the attempts which had been made to urge her, above all things, to watch her mistress as her last moments, with their probable remorse of conscience, drew on.

Then he referred to Tournichon's antecedents, and to Madelette's avowals that a plot had been carried on by Father Briffard for the last ten years; that Briffard had clamored for the legacy in Tournichon's name; that Madame de la Clavière had been on the point of altering her decision in favor of those "poor children," as she called them; and that it was by Madelette's influence, combined with that of Tournichon, who had threatened the terrors of hell if she continued obstinate, that the old lady had sent away the notary whom she had summoned to draw up a new will.

Warming with his subject, Verdalon quitted the details of the case to glance at those general

questions involved in it. He described the Jesuits as pursuing a similar policy for their own aggrandizement in all the towns of France; terrifying weak women by religious influences, and plundering them of whatever money they had at their disposal, as well as of their trinkets and diamonds, describing them as so many vanities with which they would do well to part. He drew a picture of Father Candal making a triumphant progress through France, and exposing in aristocratic drawing-rooms costly parures, valuable necklaces, and jewelry of every sort which he had extorted by his eloquence from the children of fashion. Proceeding in his revelations, he touched upon facts incredible in the nineteenth century, of a Jesuit allowing himself to be ruffed for—that is, engaging himself to be for so many days at the beck and call of whatever lady drew the highest number in the lottery. The newspapers had been full of the particulars, and their accuracy, he said, was unimpeachable. The tickets, dispensable to ladies only, were priced at one hundred francs apiece; and the novel transaction in question had actually occurred in Paris, among the ultramontane section of the female community. He quoted the towns of Marseilles, Lyons, Poitiers, with many others, as having witnessed similar transactions, of which all France had been cognizant, and which the secular clergy had bitterly, though secretly resented, being compelled to hold their tongues in the presence of their all-powerful rulers.

The entire address excited general admiration, and was repeatedly interrupted by bursts of applause, in spite of the threat of the president that he would clear the court.

M. Delpas, on the other hand, confident of Madelette's retraction, replied to the withering

attack with tolerable ingenuity, characterizing it as a malignant tale got up to support a hopeless cause. He declared that the will had been made by Madame de la Claviere with the *bond fide* intention of recompensing an old friend with whom she had been on intimate terms for ten years. He showed that a genuine attachment had sprung up between the two on the ground of their similarity of opinions, and the fact that the will was only two years old in no way interfered with his hypothesis, as would be seen by referring to the date of its provisions. The court must bear in mind the occurrence of the publication of the posthumous opinions of Cardinal de Flammarens, as well as certain sermons preached at that time, and which had excited a profound sensation in the religious world; then let them assume, if they could, that there was any thing extraordinary in Madame de la Claviere's leaving her fortune to one whose sentiments so entirely coincided with her own, in preference to a relative whose heretical opinions and teachings had so painfully embittered the last years of her life. As for Madelette, in a hasty moment of unreasonable covetousness, she had suffered herself to be out of temper with M. Tournichon; but he was prepared to state that her ill humor was of the most transient description, and that she was ready to come forward that day in open court to retract *in toto* what she had said under the influence of a fit of passion she much regretted.

This announcement on the part of the Jesuit advocate came like a thunderclap on the ears of those present, and excited the liveliest curiosity. The two pleaders having engrossed the entire duration of one sitting, the examination of witnesses was adjourned to the following day.

P A R T V.

A SEQUESTRATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

A DISAPPOINTED LOVE.

MADELETTE, who reckoned on possessing herself of the bribe which the countess had offered her, but which she was not to touch till after the trial was over, played her part to perfection. She denied none of the expressions imputed to her as having been uttered in the presence of the curé of La Clavière, but declared that she was in a fit of passion at the time, and said whatever came uppermost. Having returned to a proper state of feeling, she felt bound to tell the truth, which was, that the Jesuit fathers had nothing on earth to do with the will.

To the various questions, and even threats of the president, who, accustomed to such denials, subjected her to a strict cross-examination, she had but one reply, "I have told you all I know, M. le President. I have nothing more to say."

The deposition of the curé of La Clavière was very important. It fully confirmed what Verdeler had said, and brought up a host of contingent circumstances, all tending to elucidate the question at issue.

Whereupon Verdeler rose again, and showed that the retraction of Madelette was, to say the least of it, suspicious, after the language she had used in a fit of disappointed avarice—language which the curé's evidence had most faithfully detailed.

The case for the prosecution and defense being now closed, the president proceeded to sum up. He began by saying that, in point of law, the wishes of the testatrix were to be assumed as being expressed in the will. That it was out of the question that casual expressions, let slip by a servant in the heat of passion, should weigh with impartial magistrates; that it was their business to decide on the document itself, drawn up in legal form, and dictated by the testatrix when she was in full possession of all her faculties.

The court, having retired to deliberate, returned, after a brief absence, and gave judgment, rejecting the evidence adduced by the prosecution as to an act of spoliation having been perpetrated, through the agency of an intermediate quasi-trustee, and maintaining M. Tournichon in full possession of the property.

The surprise which this verdict created was indescribable. Verdeler was thunderstruck. The Jesuits in T—— hailed the intelligence with frantic enthusiasm. They celebrated masses in their chapel in token of gratitude. The entire aristocracy of the town poured in to con-

gratulate them. Enthusiastic devotees burnt whole warehouses of wax candles in their oratories. Sacristy, convent, monastery, all agreed to regard the issue as a miraculous interposition of the Immaculate Virgin to reward her faithful servants. Novenas had been held in her honor through the whole town; and it was on the ninth day, at the exact moment of their termination, that the judgment of the court was pronounced. None but infidels could question the meaning of so striking a coincidence.

The religious world came in troops to visit the Provincial, or sent cards in shoals. The archbishop, radiant with triumph, and accompanied by the Abbé Gaguel, was among the earliest arrivals. The ultramontane journals of Paris and the provinces teemed with details, and announced, in most startling type, the confusion that had overtaken the enemies of the saintly Jesuits.

Meanwhile Verdeler had made sure of success. As far as his magnificent oration was concerned, he was not disappointed; but he had lost the day. He was one who combined, with the brilliance of an orator, a most accurate perception of facts. He never for a moment disguised from himself the ascendancy which the Jesuits had managed to acquire in the town, or the slight prospect of gaining by any farther proceedings. However, in writing to Julio to communicate the disastrous occurrence, he pledged himself to appeal at once—less in the hope of securing a reversal of the judgment by a higher court than in a spirit of defiance, and from a desire not to appear to give way before his powerful opponents.

To which Julio replied that not only did he mean to make the appeal, but, farther than that, to prosecute it vigorously; that, as far as he was concerned, it was less a matter of personal interest or feeling—important though it was to his beloved Louise—than of positive duty to fight it out to the last with his persecutors, and expose them to the civilized world. He also told his friend that he was about to publish immediately a pamphlet against the Jesuits; and that, should he fail to gain his suit in a court of law, he would, at all events, triumph in that of public opinion—to him the main end which he had in view.

His intentions were speedily known at T——. The disclosures at the new trial, it was reported, would surpass those just made, and the Jesuits would again be lashed by Verdeler more severely than ever. Once more anxiety set in among the partisans of the reverend fathers,

and with it fresh *novenas* and plots to carry out the purpose of their celebration.

On receiving the distressing news of the recent verdict, Julio endeavored to break it to Louise as tenderly as possible. He exaggerated the prospects of the appeal, and the effect of the distribution of his pamphlet among the members of the imperial court, all which consolatory assurances she appeared to receive; but the blow had gone home to her heart, and she knew it. Shutting herself up in her little room, she entreated to be allowed to seek relief in tears, in the prospect of calamities the advent of which she had long foreseen.

Clever as Verdelon was, he had not succeeded in deceiving her. His letters, fewer and shorter as the time wore on, told of a waning love, which it needed only this fatal decision to extinguish altogether. Such was Louise's full conviction, and women are quick at divining how matters stand. Soon the only token of his existence was an occasional epistle, the wording of which was embarrassed and reserved. At length Louise replied with dignity that she understood every thing. He made no attempt to justify himself. The correspondence was almost at an end, only there remained over, from its ruins, a bleeding heart.

She tried to lavish on her brother the affection which her faithless lover had profaned. At first, in the hope of diverting her thoughts, and avoiding the bitter memories which solitude invariably fostered, she courted Julio's society more than ever. True, a brother's love was not exactly a substitute for what she had lost; still, after the heartless treachery she had experienced, his tender, thoughtful friendship could scarcely fail to prove a welcome and grateful solace.

And she felt by slow degrees its healing influences. If she could not altogether succeed in banishing Verdelon from her thoughts, she brought herself to appreciate the treasure she still possessed in the devoted attachment of one who clung to her with a most tenacious affection. All said and done, she was neither a child nor a sentimental woman. She came to the wise conclusion that time would heal the wound; and when once a cure is admitted to be possible in such cases, it is more than half effected.

Julio watched the issue of the relation between his sister and his friend with anxious interest. She never made any allusion herself to its sorrowful termination, partly from regard for his feelings, partly from shame of her own. Meanwhile, the sufferings she had been called to endure quietly overshadowed the gladness of her spirit and buried her in deep dejection. Julio felt the charm of her pensive grief, and comforted himself with the thought that it would be his to rest her aching head, and stay the anguish of her all but broken heart.

CHAPTER II.

A DARING SCHEME OF THE COUNTESS OF ****.

THE great skill of the Jesuits consists in the tact with which they form for themselves an influential party in the world. Of all the religious orders—and they are not to be blamed for it—they are the least fond of recommending young ladies to convents, especially when they are wealthy, well born, fair, or clever. To preside at their marriage, to turn them into patronesses of the society, to see them mothers of a rising race, whose education would one day be intrusted to their care, is, they think, infinitely preferable to sending them to the cloister to sing psalms in an unknown tongue. And if it be urged that Father Briffard had wanted to make Louise a nun, it must be remembered that his object was to get her out of the way of his schemes with reference to her fortune.

This is not the view, however, taken by the other religious orders. A Carmelite thinks that he has, indeed, deserved well, first of St. Theresa and afterward of God, when he has succeeded in decoying into his pit a young girl whose prospects in the world would have been brilliant and distinguished. To have infected her with his own fanaticism—to have persuaded her that by substituting the unwholesome discipline of the scourge for the luxuries and refinement of modern life, she would become an expiating victim for human guilt, and experience, in return for the domestic and social enjoyments she had relinquished, the seraphic ecstasies of meditation, the delight of a soul daily more and more disenthralled from a daily weakening body, the protecting influences of cloistered paths of sanctity, with all the unutterable delights which the uninitiated can neither enjoy nor even imagine—to have persuaded a young girl, we say, who knows nothing of herself or the world, of the reality of all this, is deemed by a monk a great and glorious achievement. He never suspects for a moment that, in pursuing an ideal such as Theresa of Avila and Mary Alacoque, he is precipitating a mind into a species of madness—we may call it a real madness—for mysticism in its highest developments is nothing else. Just as love unregulated by moral restrictions, modesty, and prudence, becomes a hateful passion, even so that noble and glorious impulse which urges souls to seek after God, and to love Him, becomes, under the manipulation of these foolish fathers, a misguided infatuation, the true character and tendencies of which are often but little suspected. Hence, undoubtedly, those terrible struggles with evil spirits in the lives of the saints; above all, of the most ecstatic of the class, detailed by their biographers in such burning language. Nature and reason, outraged alike by an extravagant system of austerity, revenge themselves by charging the imagination with hideous visions, and exciting in the emaciated frame a craving for the world that has been renounced. The pious historians of these calamitous experiences—ex-

periences unknown to those who dedicate their lives to earnest service in works of charity—give the devil, most unfairly, the whole credit of them, without seeing that the true explanation lies in the foolish disturbance of that healthy equilibrium which ought always to subsist between body and mind. And then, fools and blockheads that they are, after having roused these young girls in the flower of their youth to the highest pitch of fanatical excitement, and stuck them on what they are pleased to call the mystic summit, they clap their hands at the idiot spectacle as though they had done a very fine thing!

We may not stop to inquire whether government, according to modern views of right and justice, ought not, in the discharge of its duty, to exercise surveillance over monasteries and nunneries, where the carrying out of a barbarous system of discipline results in physical and moral suicide. In a day when mysticism in its wildest form is constantly developing itself, the question becomes a very serious one, too serious for us to discuss.

Religious freedom is, of all, the most sacred, but license to destroy one's self mentally, morally, and physically is not religious liberty, nor has it any right to the name, nor would the freedom of the Catholic Church be in the least degree impaired were government to put a quiet extinguisher on the whole race of religious orders. It becomes an interesting question for reflection whether permitting the erection of these gloomy establishments, over which not the least outside supervision is maintained, is not tantamount to countenancing most deplorable excesses.

But, to return to our starting assertion, Jesuits don't like convents. The highest order of spirituality is a very second-rate article in their judgment. They regard the top of the hill of mysticism as a great deal too elevated above the level of the sea. Ladies in society, puffing and extolling them, are far more useful to their purposes than if they were buried in the recesses of the cloister, indulging in the luxury of the penitential cat-o'-nine-tails.

For women are enthusiasts. Their nature leads them to carry their heart on their sleeve. From the moment, therefore, that any of them took to the Jesuits, they felt constrained irresistibly to praise them up to the skies, and to persuade their husbands to send their children to Jesuit schools. The impulse is innate with them—it is, in point of fact, a species of propelling force which the holy fathers manage delicately to adjust to their purposes, and sometimes as delicately to restrain.

So it is necessary to be guarded in directing into a proper channel all these female outgoings, of which prudence is by no means the characteristic feature, and which by themselves might prove dangerous. The task is difficult, and the most astute make mistakes at times. There is in them too much impulsiveness not to overthrow occasionally the most accurate calculations.

To have made use of the countess to purchase Madelette's silence without suggesting to her, for a moment, the course she was to take, was a masterpiece of policy. The society had in no way been compromised, nor its strong box applied to for the purpose. The whole affair had been a clear gain. Only the worthy fathers had overlooked the peril which might arise to them from starting in paths of her own adoption that vehement disposition of the countess which they had such trouble in managing; they had forgotten that, in the intoxication of success, she would not be very likely to submit to the complete reimposition of the yoke, and that her excessive zeal might possibly prove dangerous. When will the Jesuits ever succeed in making women understand their motto, "*tanquam ac cadaver*?"

The truth was, that the countess was so absorbed in the La Clavière matter that the whole thing had become with her a species of monomania. The Jesuits must succeed. She had saved them once; couldn't she do it again? for there was no disguising the fact that the appeal might prosper. True, the religious world had been wild with delight at the recent verdict; but then it was to be remembered that the opposites had been proportionately disgusted, and were talking loudly of their hopes from the appeal. Julio's pamphlet, they said, would disclose facts which, had they been produced as evidence at the late trial, would materially have affected the minds of the judges. In any case, the incontestable talent of the author would insure to his treatise a weighty moral influence. It was rumored, moreover, that Verdeleron was prepared to make some terrible revelations against the Jesuits, and that other prosecutions of a similar kind would be the result. At all events, whether they gained or lost, the influence of the Jesuits must inevitably suffer. Some, indeed, went on to speak of more serious measures, including even the suppression of their college.

These various rumors, exaggerated though they evidently were, drove the countess to despair. She was not altogether free from personal apprehension in the matter. Supposing Madelette divulged what had passed between them—certainly this was scarcely probable, as she had not yet got hold of the promised bribe. But then those horrid Liberals were up to any thing. Nothing easier than for them to work upon her, and worm out of her the origin of the retractation—giving more, perhaps, to set her tongue loose than she had given to chain it. Freemasonry, she was certain, would settle the whole affair. Doubtless that wretched Julio was a mason, in spite of the threats launched against any who might venture to belong to such a body. To stop this appeal in some way or other was the only method of saving the Jesuits from their enemies, and so promoting the glory of God.

But how accomplish so desirable an end? However wanting in intellect a woman may be, she is ready enough at devising the plot of

a romance. The countess, after having reflected a little while, hit upon one, not, indeed, to be written and printed, but to be acted out. She arranged her characters, distributed their various functions, assigned her own, and arrived at the conclusion that, if the whole thing were properly played out, success was certain.

Meanwhile there was no time to lose. The time was close at hand when the case would come on for hearing before the Imperial Court. The Jesuits had been duly informed by their spies that Julio's printer was expecting the manuscript of the forthcoming treatise every day. A bookseller at T—— had speculated in its purchase, estimating that the pamphlet would have an enormous sale, and be circulated over the whole of France.

Julio was in the habit of visiting his sick every week. His presence and gentle words were a comfort to the sufferers. The very sound of his voice assuaged their pain; and often he was most successful in the medical hints he gave them, so much so that his cures were, in many instances, regarded as miracles; and had he had the fancy to be esteemed a wonder-worker, he would have had no difficulty in gratifying his taste.

On one of these Thursdays, a little country girl, a stranger at St. Avenin, knocked at the presbytery door and asked to see Mademoiselle de la Clavière. Martha having shown her in, she handed Louise a small note.

"**MADemoisELLE**,—An old friend of your mother and aunt has a most important communication to make to you in your interest, and especially your brother's. If you would have the kindness to go to the little chapel, you will there meet the writer of this note, who has reasons of her own for not calling at the presbytery herself. An hour's conversation will be sufficient. Pray come at once, as time is precious."

This letter surprised Louise very much, and her first impulse was to refuse the request it contained. She proceeded to examine it closely, and discovered that it had come from a lady, as the penmanship was good and the spelling faultless. The note, too, had been written on satin paper, scented—a mark of the aristocratic tastes of its author. Most probably it was some lady of position from T——, who wanted to speak to her. So, after some hesitation, she decided to go.

Arriving at the chapel, she found a person very simply dressed on her knees before a Madonna. She seemed to be praying earnestly. Not knowing whether she was the one whom she expected, she made a slight noise behind her. The lady turned her head round, and Louise recognized the countess, whom she had occasionally seen at her aunt's. From that moment all her apprehensions vanished. She bowed to the altar, and, after a short prayer, they left the chapel together. Quitting the road, which was any thing but private at that time of day, they chose a mountain path, and,

having reached a nook in the rocks, hung with most brilliant foliage, and sheltered by a cluster of pines from the piercing sunlight, the countess seated herself, and drew Louise to her side. Then, breaking the silence which she had preserved after the first greetings had been exchanged, she said,

"Mademoiselle, I have not had the pleasure of meeting you often before, but you have always inspired me with peculiar interest."

"I am very much obliged to you, madam."

"That interest arises undoubtedly from your charming qualities, and especially from your piety. I know that it was your intention to renounce the position which your birth, beauty, and prospects held out to you, and enter the convent of the *Sacré-Cœur*. A noble idea that—to dedicate yourself, with your talents and superior intelligence, to the teaching of the young! I admire your courage."

Louise blushed at the thought how far the idea was from her mind, and began to feel uncomfortable at the good lady's eulogiums.

"I have felt, my child," continued the countess, in her most bewitching tones, "that this affection for you to which I have referred entitles me to interest myself in a matter of great moment affecting your brother and yourself."

The good sense of Louise, and an instinctive suspicion, put her on her guard against the flatteries that were being heaped upon her. The speaker's tone of voice didn't appear altogether natural. And yet she reproached herself for her passing thoughts, and for the rather cold tone in which she answered,

"I am prepared to listen to any thing you have to say, madam. May I ask to what you are referring?"

But the countess hadn't done with her preliminaries yet. Finding that she had to some extent missed her mark with the young lady, she tried another plan, which she had reserved for use, if necessary.

"Dear Louise—let me call you by that familiar name—I knew and loved your mother, and hence my chief reason for loving you."

This reference to the memory of a parent who had been dead fifteen years, but whom Louise perfectly remembered, was not thrown away. She was visibly affected, and, looking at the countess with tears in her eyes, replied,

"Then you were my mother's friend, madam, and are disposed to transfer your affection on to me. This is truly kind. I thank you very much."

And she pressed the countess's hand warmly. The ice was now broken, and the diplomatist, retaining Louise's hand in hers, resumed,

"Yes, my child, I was deeply attached to your mother, who put great confidence in me; and though, in consequence of the secluded life that your aunt led, I had few opportunities of meeting you, I still remember you with much interest. I saw with delight that you were all your mother could have wished had she lived.

Your poor mother! How young she was when she died! and the physicians could not account for her death either; there must have been some secret sorrow at the bottom of it."

Louise, becoming more and more affected by these allusions, felt all her antipathies vanish. The countess saw the advantage she had gained, and secretly chuckled.

"It is only out of love to you, Louise, that I interest myself in one for whom I know you have a strong affection, and who is at this moment in real danger."

"My brother Julio?" cried she.

"Yes, dear Louise, M. l'Abbé Julio. You know he engaged in a most iniquitous lawsuit against the Jesuits, represented by M. Tournichon."

"Not iniquitous, madam. We are quite certain that M. Tournichon is not my aunt's real heir."

"What, Louise?—for I must speak frankly to the daughter of my old friend—when your aunt had cherished the idea of giving her property to the Jesuits, ought not her wish to have been held sacred by you?"

"Most certainly, madam, had not we been both of us convinced that her mind had been perverted in the weakness of old age. My aunt repented at the last moment of having yielded to an influence from which she had not had the power to escape. Since I have been here I have consulted my memory, and some memoranda which I had made from time to time; all that we could collect has been remitted to M. Verdelon (her voice shook as she pronounced his name, which the countess remarked with a smile). He has thus been put on a track which must end in the clearing up of this matter, and secure success for the appeal, of which we have given due notice."

"Listen to me, Louise. I solemnly assure you, before God, that your aunt never intended to leave her fortune to your brother. You can not but be aware how pained she was at his views and teachings. She must have let you see that frequently."

"Quite true, madam; but I know now the persistent malice with which his character was misrepresented in her presence, and his opinions caricatured. Yet, for all that, my aunt was devotedly fond of him; she thought him mistaken, but she did full justice to the purity of his intentions. Moreover, madam, even taking your view of the case, she could not have had the same feelings with reference to me; still, she treated me in the same way; so I conclude that it wasn't my brother's doctrines that led to his being disinherited."

"But, my dear Louise, the modest allowance which your mother has left you, inadequate though it would be to set you up in the world, would be amply sufficient for you if you adopted the cloister life. Your aunt added her annuity to that, and she must have been as convinced as I am now that you really meant to enter the convent. But let it pass; that is not

the matter which immediately presses: it concerns your brother. I tell you frankly, Louise, at the risk of hurting your feelings, that I can not work myself into a very lively interest in him. The enemies of the Church, and the religious orders which the Church sanctions, are mine as well; I have no others. But, out of regard for you, and in order to prevent a frightful scandal, I am willing to give him a helping hand. Time presses, my child; if the notice of appeal is not withdrawn in two days, as well as the forthcoming publication, your brother will be interdicted by the archbishop. You know he has been threatened with this penalty before. Well, then, what would you say if I told you that the letter intimating what is in store for him is already written and signed?"

Louise was dissolved in tears. She was still too much trammelled by a training which Michelet characterizes so cleverly as a Byzantine education not to regard an interdict as the most disgraceful punishment that could be imagined. Then, too, she had indulged in dreams in which pride and affection combined: her brother, so pre-eminent in talent, so far superior to the average of priests, must necessarily reach the highest dignities of the Church. And now, instead of these brilliant prospects, she saw opening before them quite a different path of humiliation and disgrace.

"There is something still worse behind," said the countess, who had been silent for some minutes.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIVILEGES OF THE JESUITS.

LOUISE raised her head.

"And what more serious can there be, madam?"

"An interdict, you may possibly be aware, does not cut off a priest from the Church. It is a chastisement inflicted on him by ecclesiastical authority. The offender, however, still belongs to the Christian family. But there is yet a severer punishment, rarely administered in these days, which at present threatens your brother."

"Gracious heaven, madam!" cried Louise, "speak! What is the matter! What more terrible can be in store for him than suspension from his priestly office? I implore you, explain yourself. What is this fearful punishment which threatens my beloved Julio?"

"Major excommunication," said the countess, in a low voice, and as though she shuddered at what she was saying.

Those fearful words, "major excommunication," sounded in the ears of Louise like a peal of thunder. She grew very pale. Her ignorance of theological matters prevented her from seeing the absurdity and impossibility of the countess's statement.

"Excommunication!" she exclaimed. "But,

madam, to be excommunicated you must have committed some grave offense."

"To be opposed to the edicts and constitutions of the sovereign pontiffs is criminal in any Catholic, much more so in a priest."

"And in what is my brother opposed to the edicts of the sovereign pontiffs?"

"Your religious education, like that of most young ladies, has been dreadfully neglected, my dear child," said the countess, who, having read a few theological books of the most extravagant style, had founded on the doctrine she had extracted from them a little romance she was now enacting. "Let me inform you that the second fundamental principle in the constitution of the Jesuits is that the papal sovereignty in the spiritual and temporal order, according to the doctrine of true Catholics, has communicated its absolute power to the company in the person of the general, for the preservation and advancement of the temporal and spiritual good of society. You see from that, dear Louise, that the general is an infallible judge in whatever concerns the spiritual or temporal interest of his order; also that the Pope is the same for whatever relates to the temporal or spiritual interests of the papacy."

Louise had never considered these questions, though she had been brought up at the Sacré-Cœur in ideas of the most extravagant Ultramontaniam. Her good, sound sense, and the sentiments she had heard from her brother, cleared her mind in some degree; but the light was only feeble. It required time to obliterate first impressions; and Louise, in spite of her better thoughts, had been obliged to ask herself, from time to time, whether her brother was justified in differing from such illustrious authorities as Father Briffard, Tournichon, and the other gentlemen who used to come every evening to have their little rubber with her aunt. What she now heard about excommunication, of absolute power intrusted to the Jesuits, and of the transmission of infallibility, threw her into the greatest confusion: her fears affected the soundness of her judgment; and the countess saw, with delight, that she had induced the poor girl, under the influence of terror, to believe whatever she chose to say.

"The entire power of the Jesuits," she resumed, "was scarcely known in France. The anti-Catholic laws do not always permit them to use it in temporal matters; but they would not venture to cancel the rights accorded by the only irresponsible tribunal on earth—the tribunal of Rome. The Popes have held them in such high favor that Paul III. gave them leave to build and to acquire, in any part of the world—all power, secular and ecclesiastical, notwithstanding. Pius V. did even more for them. By a bull, he awarded to them all the rights, past, present, and to come, that had ever been conceded to religious orders by papal authority, and all which could possibly be conceded, without the mention of any favor in special; and forbade, at the same time, that these privilèges

should ever be taken from them. Should such an event occur, the general might re-establish himself and the society in all their previous rights at any subsequent period. So you see that, in opposing the Jesuits in a temporal matter, you oppose the papacy itself. This is where your brother is specially affected, and you too, if you do not yield to good advice. Then there is major excommunication—pronounced, *ipso facto*, against any king, prince, or minister who should in any way tax or rob the society. Of course, under the present unfortunate civil administration of France, this right could not be asserted, but it exists for all that; and those who occasion any injury to the society, who dare to retain what belongs to it, who attack its principles, or impugn the conduct of its members, come under the penalties of that rite. Now your brother, wishing to upset your aunt's will, on the supposition—a perfectly correct one—that the Jesuits, and not M. Tournichon, are her heirs, attacks their property, and, by writing a pamphlet against them, their character. You understand, my dear child, if the civil law—a mere heathen enactment—did not arrest him—even if it condemned the Jesuits—spiritual law would overtake the faithless and dishonest priest, first in the form of interdiction, and then of major excommunication. The sentence has arrived from Rome; the Provincial will forward it to the archbishop in two days, who will then be obliged to promulgate it."

"In two days!" exclaimed Louise, completely bewildered by the theological lore with which the countess had overwhelmed her.

"In two days," said the countess, very deliberately, "the sentence—the orders are positive—will be announced, and affixed to the church door."

Louise was overwhelmed with consternation.

"You understand, my child, that the fathers have been driven to this step in self-defense. However, they are so kind and merciful—and Father Briffard especially has so tender a spiritual interest in you, as your spiritual guide, and is so unwilling to see your vocation imperiled by constant intercourse with one who ought to strengthen it, that he is anxious, for your sake, to save your brother. The matter is entirely in your hands."

"In my hands, madam? Tell me what can I do. I would make any sacrifice for Julio's sake."

"Is it so? Then you will save him—you will save him—and," added the countess, carelessly, "you will even render, though that is a mere secondary consideration with you, an essential service to M. Verdelon."

"To M. Verdelon!"

Her voice changed, and a warm glow colored her pale cheeks under the influence of her painful emotion.

"Good heavens!" thought the countess, watching her narrowly. "I was hesitating before as to whether she loved the advocate or not; now I know she does."

"Most certainly you will. A day or two ago he proposed to a very rich young lady. I must not mention her name, as it is a secret; but her relatives, who are very religious, have refused their consent unless he will give up this wretched suit. He considers his honor pledged to continue it; so that, of course, if the appeal were abandoned, he would be free to make an excellent marriage. The young lady is greatly attached to him."

Louise had turned as pale as death.

"Be so good as to tell me, madam, what I must do."

"You are quite sure that your brother is only following up this matter in your interest?"

"In that of justice first, madam, then of mine."

"Justice must be on the side of the Jesuits; they alone are competent to judge in that matter."

"Be it so, madam; I understand that we must bend before them. But, in the name of Heaven, what am I to do to save my brother?"

"Father Briffard, who has sent me to you, asks but two things; if you consent, the bull of excommunication will be burnt, and the threatened interdict abandoned. Father Briffard himself will undertake to arrange the matter at the palace."

"Tell me, madam, tell me what I'm to do. I care nothing for my fortune. What good would it be to me now?"

Good! thought the countess; the news of the pretended marriage of Verdalon has produced its effect.

"I thought, my dear child," she said, "that your soul was too elevated to be engrossed by mere perishable advantages. The world, I may remark, is by no means worthy of you."

"Never mind me, madam, it's my brother I'm thinking of, time is precious."

"First, then, you must give up this appeal. I will dictate to you the form of renunciation." And the countess produced writing materials from her traveling bag.

"Of course, that rejection once deposited with the court, your brother would abandon his share in the matter. Deprived of the plea of your interests, he could not but do so."

The form was in the following words:

"I, Louise Julio de la Claviere, residing at —, declare that, being fully convinced, through information that has reached me, that the intention of my late aunt, Susan Guirrat de la Claviere, was to leave all her property to M. Tournichon, save and except the legacies specified in the will, abandon the appeal which has been notified as much in my name as in that of my brother, not deeming it right to attack a legacy which I know to have been freely made in favor of M. Tournichon, without any of the conditions which constitute an intermediate trustee.

"Done at St. Avenin, 12th of September, 1860."

"Madam," said Louise, when she had signed the paper, "I do this to save my brother; but I

can not disguise from myself that he would condemn my act, for I have sworn falsely. The object of this entire proceeding has been to protect the property for the Jesuits, and in stating otherwise I state what's false. May God forgive me, and those who drive me to such extremities!"

"You do not see things as they really are, Louise. What matter that the terms of that paper refer to Tournichon. There have been many other cases where equivocation to a certain extent has been admissible."

"And now, madam, Father Briffard's second condition."

"Which is imposed upon you solely in your own interest."

"Name it, please," said Louise, impatiently.

"Your brother must not know just yet what has passed between us. Indeed, even by-and-by, I hope that you will not tell him more than prudence requires. So it would be well for you to retire to a convent till the whole thing is over. The opportunity will enable you to have the advantage of a 'retreat,' and to ask God to instruct you on the matter of your vocation. Father Briffard is convinced that it is real, and is unable to conjecture what you can have seen in the world to obliterate the memory of your solemn and most binding promise."

"There is nothing in the world which I should regret but dear Julio," said Louise, whose heart was terribly wounded at the thought of her lover's treason. Alas! she had foreseen it: the coldness of his last letters had convinced her that it was at hand. But there is such an infinite distance between apprehension and reality. Poor Louise never questioned the assertion of the countess as to his marriage. Crushed down, however, as she was by the distressing interview she had just had, she resisted the suggestion that she should accompany the countess, without letting her brother know, or taking his advice. To do so would terrify him beyond measure, and she wouldn't hear of it.

But all the answer she got was, that Father Briffard held as firmly by his second condition as by his first; that, the retreat over, she could return to St. Avenin; or, in any circumstance, write to her brother. And the threat of interdict and major excommunication was judiciously repeated.

Louise yielded at last, and wrote to her brother, the countess dictating the letter.

"MY DEAR JULIO,—I am convinced that the lawsuit which we had intended to prosecute against M. Tournichon is unjust, and I, for my part, give up the appeal. I am leaving you for a few days; it entirely depends upon you whether you see me back again soon. Give up this wretched prosecution. Above all, give up the publication of your pamphlet against the Jesuits, which would involve us both in the most serious calamities. Do this for the love you bear your sister. I can not explain more, but I am resolved not to return to St. Avenin till you have

yielded to my wishes. Remember that, if you refuse me, you will possibly separate us forever."

The countess begged her to give her a copy of the letter to show Father Briffard. Then they wound round the mountain by a by-path which led to the Luchon road. The day was waning; a carriage was waiting. The countess and Louise got into it together.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLICE ON THE SEARCH.

THE evening meal-time had long passed when Julio returned home, smiling inwardly as he thought of the charming scolding he would have from Louise for having let the dinner get cold which Martha had prepared, she being by no means disposed to have her handiwork lightly esteemed. However, he consoled himself with the thought that he had an excellent excuse; that he had been intrusted, by more than one of his sick people, with such warm messages of grateful affection to Louise for the relief she had brought them, that he felt that peace would soon be proclaimed. They would have to laugh over a cold dinner, which would prove excellent after all, and to leave the worthy Martha to grumble at her leisure. Never, perhaps, had Julio so fully entered into the attractions of his beloved home, where Louise was to him every thing in the world.

At first he was a little astonished to hear that Louise had left the presbytery about an hour after him, and had not yet returned. Martha carefully related to Julio every thing that had happened since he left home: how a child had brought a letter, and how Louise, on reading it, had changed her dress, put on her bonnet and shawl, and gone out, without saying where she was to be found.

These particulars made him anxious. Why that care about her appearance? Till then her recent mourning had prevented her from visiting the few gentry round. Where could she have gone? She knew no one. And then, who sent that letter? For a moment Julio thought of Verdalon. Could he have asked for an interview? But no; he knew well that he was always welcome at the presbytery; there was no necessity for him to take a roundabout way to speak to Louise, and she, too, must have judged such a course inexpedient in the extreme.

This last thought made poor Julio feel very angry; not for long, however. Had Louise gone to meet Verdalon by appointment, he argued, she would have returned a long time ago. Five hours had elapsed since her departure; she would never subject her brother to such anxiety for so long a time. So, clearly Verdalon had no hand in the matter. Then came another thought, most terrible of all—had some accident happened to her?

But what could he do? Where could he

seek her? There was no sign whatever as to the direction in which she had gone. Neither Martha nor the neighbors knew any thing about her. He must wait a while.

Seating himself at the table on which Martha had served the dinner, buried in thought, his head resting on his hands, his imagination was rapidly crowded with the most sinister forebodings. He did not even answer the servant when she entreated him at all events to take some soup, but, quitting his chair, took to pacing up and down the room with rapid steps. Then he went out and explored all the pathways near, asking himself, with bitterness of spirit, who the person could be that had carried her off. So passed the evening. As soon as it was night, Julio began to think about asking some of his parishioners, who had just come home from work, to aid him in a torchlight search. Each might follow a different path, he thought, agreeing on the places where they were to fall in with one another. Suddenly there was a knock at the door; expecting to see Louise, he opened it, and found a young fellow, almost an idiot, standing before him. The lad belonged to a neighboring parish, and was known for a beggar throughout the whole mountain. He knew enough to enable him to execute the few commissions intrusted to him, but his only utterances were confused sounds, or a few words which his wretchedness had taught him, such as "some bread," "I'm cold," "give me a sou." Incoherently muttering to Julio, he handed him, with a grin, the strange letter, which Louise, meeting him near the little chapel, had intrusted to his care. The countess had readily agreed to employ him, as being of all messengers the least likely to compromise them. And Louise was consoled by the thought that her brother would not pass the night in agonizing suspense.

The poor idiot boy was very fond of Julio and Louise. They had often spoken kindly to him, and given him a plentiful meal, the only enjoyment of which his wretched existence was capable. He had evidently run with his letter, for he was covered with perspiration, though that did not make him forget his customary trifling complaint. Julio brought him in and told Martha to take care of him, while he opened with trembling hands the dispatch from Louise.

It revealed to him an odious plot, involving his sister and himself. He could not but suspect as the agents in it those who were interested in terrifying her and driving her to extremities. This was evidently another Jesuit proceeding.

Meanwhile, one crushing load was taken from his breast. He would soon know where Louise was, and was relieved from the necessity of exploring the mountain precipice, with the dread of finding her mangled remains at the bottom. After all the misery he had passed through, this letter was almost a comfort. As to questioning the messenger, that was idle. Doubtless there would be another letter the next day explaining the whole mystery.

That night he never closed his eyes for thinking of her, and asking himself where she was, and how she could have been ever induced to write in so extraordinary a way to him.

As to abandoning the appeal and pamphlet, that was utterly out of the question. The whole thing was a shameful device, which it behooved him to thwart.

The next morning he set out for T—, and called at the printer's with his manuscript. A paragraph in the leading local journal announced that the work was in the press. Thence he repaired to the court.

The clerk told Julio that his sister's abandonment of the appeal had been communicated to them that morning. Meanwhile, the young priest was received with the utmost courtesy. He made his deposition as to Louise's recent disappearance, and placed her letter in the official hands, in order to advertise the authorities of what had occurred.

At that time the French magistracy was watching the religious orders with extreme vigilance. Grave complaints and consequent inquiries had established most damning facts with reference to the abduction of young girls in their minority, who had been retained in spite of the earnest protests of their parents. Law-suits had been the result; and it had transpired that even priests had been cognizant of these glaring violations of the statute.

"Depend upon it," said the official, "we will leave no stone unturned to hunt out Mademoiselle de la Clavière, not only in this department, but, if needful, through the whole of France. Special instructions shall be given to our foreign agents, and the police will make every effort on your behalf. Only we must follow the prescribed routine course. We can not proceed against any one in the matter. Your sister is not a minor, as she is twenty-two years of age. So, in the eye of the law, she is her own mistress. This letter of hers shows dangers ahead with which you are both threatened. But the law can only reach crime actually committed, and not what is merely *contemplated*. One may see at once that the Jesuits are at the bottom of this business; but if they are entitled to the reputation they have acquired, they will have been too cunning to show themselves in the matter, though they are the only ones interested in it. I would lay any wager that your sister is in none of those convents of the Sacré-Cœur which are under their sole jurisdiction. Had we the power to do so, we might make a formal search in that quarter; but you may rest satisfied that we should never succeed in establishing a case against the good fathers."

"Then the law is powerless," said Julio. "You acknowledge that the Jesuits are the authors of this precious kidnapping—clearly effected by violence, for my sister acknowledges that she is in danger. She speaks of calamities in which any persistent refusal to comply with her requests will involve us."

"You are a little too rapid in your conclu-

sions, M. l'Abbé. We must not assume any actual peril, from the fact that your sister hints at such being the case, in order to override your judgment, and obtain from you a compliance with her wishes. Possibly she might have thought that she was justified in what she asked, without any intimidation having been practiced upon her; or possibly she is the dupe of some wretched intrigue, intended to menace you, the true character of which would never have been suspected by one so artless and upright as she is. Under any circumstances, here is no evidence of a positive crime, and such alone the law has power to recognize and punish. Moreover, the bigoted partisans of the order, whether with the complicity of the Jesuits or without it, at all events with their tacit consent, are quite competent to devise a dark scheme, and to brave the law in carrying it out. Similar cases were brought under our notice a few weeks ago. And we are well aware that certain abductions, actually proved, are about to be vindicated in two or three towns. But in these cases, I repeat it, the subjects were under age. However, notwithstanding all I have said on this point, greatly as, I see, it has taken you by surprise—for you, like others, believe that we can do every thing—I promise you that we will make every effort in our power to arrive at a favorable issue in this business. Whether your sister were of age or not, if it can be shown that she has been the victim of a plot, and has been violently withdrawn from your protection, we are in duty bound to help her, and you may count fully on our utmost exertions. Meanwhile, do you, for your part, prosecute an unremitting search. I shall always be happy to see you on this matter, in which I take, pray believe me, a lively interest; and any traces, however small, which you may have gathered, will aid us in discovering the guilty persons, if, as I said before, we are able to establish any guilt in the case."

Greatly disheartened, Julio left the office. Injured men are slow to understand that the law can not give them any immediate redress. The delays in such cases, the deliberate proceedings of the officers of justice, charged with the detection of crimes, and feeling their way in the execution of their task, are, after all, but a guarantee on all sides for the unimpaired liberty of the subject. Julio, from the moment of his sister's departure, had, in full accordance with his impulsive disposition, planned out the entire sequel. He already saw the Jesuits—the guilty contrivers of constant embezzlements of inheritances and abduction of heirs and heiresses—convicted by law of having adopted shameful measures to compel him to abandon his protests. Meanwhile, the magistrates had thrown cold water on this glowing prospect by reminding him that, before any attempt could be made to prosecute the Jesuits, or any one else, a criminal charge must be established.

Verdelon learned with apparent coolness from Julio's lips the story of Louise's disappearance.

"How could she suffer herself to fall into such a palpable snare?" he asked. "Truly, women are not overgifted with common sense."

"How can you say so? A young girl, honest and simple-minded, in the hands of such fellows—"

"He must be very innocent, indeed, Julio, who could believe that any violence would be practiced in these days."

"And yet it has been before now."

"Of course it has, on children. The cases are well known. But a woman of twenty-two or three . . ."

It was plain that he wanted to prove Louise in fault.

"Well, never mind arguing; what are we to do?"

"A question more easily asked than answered. However, be careful as to what you put into that pamphlet; the Jesuits might indict you for libel, and send you to prison. So be on your guard. Failing any other revenge, they would rejoice in seeing you inculcate yourself. And, to speak frankly, after the judgment of the civil tribunal, I begin to think you would not get very gentle handling. I am sorry to own it, but Mistress Themis has her little leanings to the side of might."

"And Louise?"

"What can you expect? She is of age, and if she has been induced to listen to a tissue of nonsense, and is passed on from convent to convent, out of your way, where would you look for her? You ought to know as well as I what men like these are capable of."

"You are a bit of a Job's comforter."

"My dear fellow, it is necessary to be practical in common life, and look things in the face, as they really are. Your sister has done a very foolish thing, and you will have to put up with the consequences. She has left you, more or less, of her own free will. The wording of her letter gives not the slightest hint at violence having been used; she has been terrified, and that's all."

"Then, would you recommend my abandoning this appeal?"

"Most certainly not. You have a chance yet, and you ought to follow it up. Our honor is involved, and, in the presence of a threat like this, you should be more determined than ever to proceed."

"Exactly what I think. I have just taken my manuscript to the printer's."

"Then look over the proofs very carefully. Above all, make no allusion to this affair; the Jesuits will prosecute you for libel if you do. I repeat the warning for your good."

"And Louise?"

"You must hunt her up."

Julio withdrew. Never had Verdelon been so cold. Not only love, but friendship even, had disappeared, as he plainly saw.

He spent several days at T— in fruitless searches. Those of the police, abetted by their cleverest country agents, were not a bit more

successful. It was evident that Mademoiselle de la Clavière was not in the town, nor had she even passed through it on leaving St. Avenin.

The investigation went on at Paris, in the provinces, and even in foreign countries. The magistracy was in constant communication with Julio. At that time a greater need than ever was felt for zealous action in such cases; so the Minister of Justice was duly apprised of the whole facts of the case by a report from the Procureur Impérial.

CHAPTER V.

PAINFUL REACTION.

THE sight of the presbytery which had once contained his beloved Louise revived all that acute grief which his movements from place to place, his visits, his proceedings in a large town, had almost seemed to have lulled. He was a solitary man, with leisure to meditate on his loss. A few chance pages of his diary betray the broken-hearted condition into which he was plunged.

* * * * *

"And now I am alone!

"All my dreams of happiness, all my visions of innocent delight in the lowliest of presbyteries, of a life passed in happy communion with God and nature—the most blessed that can be experienced on earth—have vanished at a breath!

"They have taken away my treasure—the only boon I had asked from God on earth. Where are they keeping her? Perhaps beyond the sea. Jesuit power reaches over the world.

"Often since this fatal tragedy—which I can not even now realize, so utterly romantic does it appear—has it seemed as though I had been hurried far away into the past, and this outrage had been accomplished in some distant traditional period when law was powerless to defend individual rights—stopping, as it did, on the threshold of each baronial territory, and compelling valiant knights to constitute themselves a vigorous police, and arm in chivalrous defense of the widow and the orphan.

"Had this crime, which is killing me, been perpetrated in the Middle Ages, I should have had but a very limited sphere to explore in searching after my sister's prison. Yet here I am in the nineteenth century! And probably they are hurrying her off, with a cargo of girls, in outrageous costumes, destined for Chinese or Australian missions. So, from this time forward, I must be a knight-errant.

"But I ought not to revile our modern civilization. If it has favored the escape of bandits, the abduction of women, the shutting up of poor, weak, deluded creatures in convent cells, it has, at all events, enabled me to proclaim my wrongs all over the world, wherever my language is understood. I am enabled to chastise, now and for ages to come, my worthless perse-

cutors. I shall bequeath to posterity my vehement protest against the reckless ambition of an order which threatens the ruin of Catholicism.

"But these men laugh at my powerlessness. Possibly, at this very moment, while I am beguiling my sorrows by writing thus, they are obtaining from the tribunal of justice a second confirmation of their robbery. And the bigot will applaud their triumph, and thank heaven for its accomplishment. There will be masses in grateful acknowledgment, and in honor of the fathers so unrighteously accused; while the plundered heir, the victim of their toils, will be held up to the saintly crew as a monster of iniquity, meriting their pious hatred—the accursed one to be overwhelmed with their anathemas—the outcast from the priesthood, denied the touch of a friendly hand, or the glance of a friendly eye!

"Reason and right judgment, whither hast thou fled? and thou, fell superstition, hideous fanaticism, the degrader of the moral sense, what fearful progress hast thou not made!

"Yet they will be amazed at this greeting from the outside world! A giant conspiracy against them is strengthening year after year. And on the day when they shall have crowned, by their colossal institutions, their triumph over the revolutions which have trodden them under, and made void the judicial sentences of expulsion which have been launched against them, by a new growth and strength, as well as by a prosperity surpassing any of their most brilliant earlier periods, they will find society as inveterate as ever against them, dreading, as did the ages gone by, that tyranny which they have maintained throughout Europe, and equally prepared with careful precautions against falling under that rule of priestcraft which they have so earnestly and so invariably promoted. The abhorrence of public opinion surprises them. They have declared deadly war against it, it is true; but the world can defend itself.

"They delight to say, 'It is not us that our adversaries attack; in persecuting our order, they persecute religion, the Church, the papacy, of which we are such fervent champions.'

"Yet, to begin with, my Jesuit friends, wherein are you better supports of religion than the forty thousand priests of France—you, with your paltry four or five hundred preachers and professors?

"Is your pulpit eloquence superior to ours? Does a Jesuit's sermon surpass so very much a parish vicar's? Not that I can see. Your teaching, too—is it marked by some peculiar virtue beyond either the knowledge or the practice of our humblest provincial seminaries? What can you do more in the confessional than we? You are more lenient, you say; that's your look-out. You flatter a set devoted to your interests and your pockets. You send your penitents right off to heaven by a path of roses. Do it, and welcome for us. God can be merciful to your votaries, as He is to the

poor, the rustic, the laborer in our flocks. But, for pity's sake, give up this absurd pretension to be the vanguard of Catholicism. The Church existed before you were graciously pleased to have your being; and it is under the influence of your blessed economy that she is tottering to her fall, and Rome temporal is being borne upon your stalwart shoulders to ruin and decay.

"St. Ignatius gave you birth in the sixteenth century. St. Vincent de Paul founded his order at the commencement of the seventeenth. Oblige me by explaining the cry, 'Down with the Jesuits!' and the total absence of a similar cry, 'Down with the Lazarists!'

"Again: the Sulpicians, established at the same time, are very well known as presiding over the first seminary in France. It is from under their wing that a long line of bishops, preachers, and divines have gone forth. They superintend a multitude of educational establishments throughout the length and breadth of the country. I was their pupil at T——. Pray, how is it that popular odium has never overtaken these men, who, in good truth, have promoted the great cause of religion, without the least ostentation, without announcing that they are foremost in every thing that concerns the Church, by services at least rivaling yours in extent, and infinitely exceeding them in permanence.

"Yet, to the best of my recollection, I never heard the cry, 'Down with the Sulpicians!' Still less is the name Sulpician, so far as I am aware, synonymous with hypocrisy and Pharisaic pride.

"May I ask whether as much can be said for the name *Jesuit*?

"Ah! sirs, the world is against you, for the simple reason that it has a horrible reckoning with you in store; while against the Sulpicians, the Lazarists, and the various associations of the humble and unpretending secular clergy devoted to the quiet discharge of their holy work, it has not a word of complaint, for they have never done it wrong.

"Nor is it religion that is the cause of the outcry against you; it is your vicious ambition and pride; your priestcraft; your pious stratagems, with which you and other orders of his day were reproached by Camus, bishop of Belley. Not a year passes without some prosecution being directed against you. In the day of your power, under the old government, you practiced the same course as you are now following under the new. And if you are incurring the same accumulated hatred, don't complain; it is popular justice.

"But here I am, working up a full indictment against the Jesuits. Better study some little flower, or the glories of nature which are forever unveiling themselves in these imperial mountains.

"Ah! beloved Pyrenees, so bright with never-fading beauty, so rich in treasure for the student or the naturalist, who can say how long I shall be permitted to linger among ye? If they

have carried off my poor sister, have they not a thousand schemes for capturing her brother? Little doubt but that my Jesuit exposure will be recompensed in Jesuit coin. A blind episcopate is their tool, using them against us, little dreaming all the while that they are acquiring the upper hand over it; and it is but fair. They are the real bishops. The poor archbishop will think it expedient to sacrifice one of his priests to their wishes, and some day or other my pastoral rights here will be taken from me by the hand of authority.

"Be it so; I must bow my head. Accursed one, be prepared for speedy vengeance. Outcast, incase thy soul, such as it is, in armor of proof, and oppose it to the coming storm.

"And you, ye pleasant dreams, saintly memories of the only woman's heart that has ever throbbled on mine, spare me a little! Recall not, I beseech you, those holy joys, perhaps the last that this poor troubled life of mine will ever know, or I shall break down utterly under my accumulated woes!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE WANDERING JEW AT THE THEATRE.

A SHORT time before the appeal against the unfortunate decision in favor of the Jesuits came off, public opinion, outraged by all that had occurred, took signal vengeance on the evil doers. Whenever a popular demonstration occurs in the South, all the elements of excitement are developed to their fullest extent. The Southern races of France feel keenly, and are enthusiastic haters and lovers. Impulsive in the extreme, there are times when they are unable to contain their emotion, and are with difficulty arrested on the limits of violence.

Whether by chance, and according to a previously ordered programme, or whether from a suspicion of the interest which the piece would arouse, both from the frequency of its disrespectful allusions to the Jesuits, and the coincidence of Julio's second suit being about to be heard, M. Jules Reni, the manager of the theatre of T—, announced in his bills, one fine morning, the drama of the *Wandering Jew*, in which a talented artist was to appear as Rodin.

Whereupon there was a huge sensation in the town. The Jesuit spies took good care to make known the unpalatable fact in the proper quarter. Their friends cried out against the scandal. The president, they declared, would never permit the play to come off; and to accomplish this desirable interference, they left no measure untried. However, the authorities were inexorable. The mayor of T—, who had the supervision of the theatre, declared that he would not suffer any tampering with the liberty of the stage, as the piece was thoroughly moral, and had been acted at Paris. The prefect, assailed on all sides by powerful menaces from the "religious" community, took refuge in a telegraphic

appeal to head-quarters. The opponents expected a triumph, but were dismayed on learning the reply of the Minister of the Interior to the effect that government never meddled with theatrical representations, leaving them to be dealt with by the local authorities.

Thence they repaired to the magistracy and the heads of the superior courts, but met, on all sides, the same refusal to mix in an affair altogether out of their jurisdiction.

So the *Wandering Jew* was to be played.

Meanwhile all these various devices and exertions of the Jesuit partisans became known to the public, and were the subject of significant comment, even in the *cafés*. In Liberal circles they were the one theme of conversation. The whole affair was creating immense interest in T—.

On the morning of the first performance, M. Jules Reni received a letter from a messenger, who had asked the doorkeeper of the theatre, with an air of mystery, to show him the way to the manager's private room. The communication was as follows:

"Father Guillet, Provincial of the Jesuits, has a matter of great importance to communicate to M. Reni. He would feel greatly obliged to him if he would have the goodness to call, at his earliest convenience, at the establishment in the Rue de l'Inquisition.

"The manager will easily understand the important considerations which prevent M. Guillet from calling on him personally, and will kindly excuse him on that account.

(Signed), "GUILLET, S. J."

Now M. Reni was too polite not to accede at once to this request. So he prepared, without delay, to call on the Provincial, and within an hour was at the door of the Jesuit establishment.

"I wish to see M. Guillet, the Provincial," he said to the porter.

"I will go and tell him, sir. Your name, if you please?"

"Say the manager of the theatre."

The passage in which M. Reni had spoken to the porter communicated with the small court where the reverend fathers were at that moment taking their recreation. Some of them had heard the ominous title, "the manager of the theatre." In a moment it passed from lip to lip, and as M. Reni went through the court on his way to the Provincial's room, he had the gratification of seeing them crossing themselves devoutly, as though a personage, whom it is unnecessary to name more particularly, had been suddenly let loose among them. The subsequent interview—the particulars of which he made no secret of afterward—took place between him and Father Guillet alone.

"I have called as quickly as I could, sir, in compliance with the request in your note."

"How exceedingly kind of you, M. le Directeur; I wish to speak to you about a very delicate matter. You intend to put forward a play

malevolently aimed at our order. In the present state of public feeling, such a proceeding can not but be attended by dangerous results. It will only inflame the popular excitement, already fearfully in the ascendant. Can not we come to some understanding with a view to withdrawing the piece?"

"That would be exceedingly difficult, sir; it would grievously disappoint the public."

"I understand. However, if some compensation were made to the various actors—"

M. Reni saw through his man at once, but he thought he should like to try how far he would proceed in his proposals.

"The actors, sir," he replied, "love their work. Nothing would make up to them for the applause they expect from the justice of the audience as an acknowledgment of their successful efforts."

"But surely a large sum"

"I should never have the face, sir, to make proposals to my staff, which they would regard as insulting to the career they so honorably pursue."

"Still, reflect a moment . . . There is yourself . . . the question is to prevent a public scandal in T—. All right-thinking people will approve . . ."

"I am much obliged to you, sir, but I happen to be of the number of those who have a constitutional aversion to bribes."

The Jesuit was not to be beaten yet. After that avowal, dryly as it had been uttered, he had the face to say,

"We are willing to go as far as 20,000 francs."

"Very much obliged to you indeed, sir. You have given me the finest point I could have wished. My very humble respects to you, sir. Good morning."

And he left him in the utmost confusion. How could men so famed for astuteness expose themselves to such an answer? How was it that they did not foresee that a refusal being more than probable, their offers would bring down upon them the derision of the entire town? I simply record this fact as a fact. I am at a loss to account for it. Very likely the Provincial fancied that the manager of a theatre and his staff of actors were a posse of low-minded fellows easily bought over. He never suspected that there could be such a thing as dignity and honor on the stage.

It would be needless to expatiate on the tremendous outburst created in the fashionable world of T— by the news of all that had transpired at this characteristic conference. The adventure rushed through the town like an electric spark. The theatre was too limited to contain the throng which pressed for admission. The whole Place du Capitole was crowded with a dense mass; and while the actor charged with the character of Rodin depicted to the very life the man who bows down to the ground in his factitious humility, the better to exalt himself in all the imperiousness of his pride, there were

borne in to swell the tumult of stamping feet and frantic applause which resounded through the house, and echoed in the distance like peals of thunder, the shouts of the thousands outside who had been unable to obtain admission, and who, in their irritation, relieved themselves by furious abuse of the sons of Loyola.

For an entire month, this one play was repeated night after night, at the incessant demand of the public, whose excitement seemed rather to increase than diminish. Frequently was it necessary to have recourse to strong measures to repress the too violent demonstrations and the too fierce allusions to the unhappy Jesuits. The audience were wild with delight at the actor who played Rodin. They flung garlands at his feet. They greeted him with three times three whenever he appeared on the stage. At the conclusion of the piece, he was summoned before the curtain time after time. He was all but chaired in triumph on leaving the theatre. The glowing excitement was chiefly concentrated on him; and summary vengeance was wreaked upon the Jesuits by each frantic thunder of applause which hailed his performances.

CHAPTER VII.

THE APPEAL.

THREE days after the departure of Louise, Julio received the following letter:

"MY BROTHER,—In God's name, if you love me, do not forsake me. Believe me this once when I assure you that my liberty and even my life are at stake. Abandon your purpose. I am a great distance away from you, but your compliance with my request will restore me to you again."

At last Julio hesitated. He had no doubt whatever that it was the Jesuits who had carried her off. The question was, would they dare to murder her?

"No! a thousand times no! There was something at the bottom of it. It was easy to imagine in how many ways they might terrify a poor girl, hidden away in a cell out of the reach of her friends. But they would never venture to proceed to violence. Her words were but an exaggeration occasioned by her misery—nothing more."

And yet the thought of his sister's despair was anguish to Julio.

"After all," he said to himself, "what is the good of this fortune? Were Louise to get her money back, Verdalon would marry her. In her poverty she will remain with me. I shall have my beloved sister once again under my roof. She is too good for the world. The loss of the suit is perhaps the means designed by God to rescue her from the snares of a frivolous life. Then I had better have done with this appeal—the chances are two to one against my gaining it. But no. I have no right to do so,

in my sister's interest. She is young and inexperienced in the ways of the world, from the seclusion of her previous life. True, she has signed her abandonment of the fresh prosecution; but, if I go on with it, her act is of no effect. Twenty-three years old though she is, she is a child to me, and I am bound to do my duty to the last. I must consider her prospects. I have no right to shut her up in a presbytery. If I did, I might expect one day remorse and even reproach, and have to convict myself of cowardice and selfishness."

At that moment a suspicion crossed Julio's mind.

"Supposing this was not written by my sister, after all."

He took it up again and examined it carefully. The letters, looked at one by one, were thoroughly Louise's; yet there was a manifest want of freedom in the writing; each character appeared to have been formed separately, and stood apart from its neighbor, as in printing. A good penman had told him once that forgers of handwriting betrayed themselves frequently by petty details, such as the crossing of their *t*'s; their semicolons, and flourishes at the end of words. A brief examination of the paper on these points convinced him that it was fictitious. Each final letter ended with a short, straight line, while Louise's were always rounded off. Here the semicolons were abrupt and stumpy. Louise's were long and wavy. The *t*'s in this letter were crossed by a very thin horizontal stroke, while Louise invariably finished hers off with a random curve.

The words "St. Arentin, near Luchon," on the outside of the letter, were written with a thick, clumsy penstroke. When Louise wrote to her brother, she always rounded off this decoration of the address with a graceful bend and genteel flourish.

"No more doubt upon the subject," he said to himself; "the thing is not from her."

Next morning there was another visit from the postman; the communication, like its predecessor, bore the T— stamp upon it. It ran as follows:

"If your abandonment of the appeal is not lodged with the authorities in forty-eight hours from this time, my doom will be fixed forever, and you will never see me again. Brother, brother, take pity on me."

This time the imitation was less careful than before. The writer had clearly taken very little trouble about it. There were capitals in it utterly unlike Louise's. Moreover, she would never have used technical terms. What did she know about "abandonment of appeal," and "lodged with the authorities?"

"A little patience," said Julio, "and the mystery will clear up; the Jesuits will pay dear for this before long."

The appeal day came at last. The question was argued before a higher tribunal. The public of T— were more interested in the matter

than before; a sort of feverish excitement spread like an epidemic through the town. The rival parties—Clerical and Liberal—eyed one another with any but affectionate glances. Disputants in the South are always on the point of coming to high words, and not unfrequently do it. The tallow-chandlers had a busier time than ever in supplying tapers for the multitudinous shrines of the Virgin. There was a perfect storm of novenas, and the Jesuits, without knowing it, and most certainly without wishing it, were let in for the drudgery of the secular clergy. Enthusiasts of every class invaded the sacristies, full of timid trust in the blessed solemnities which were to be the salvation of the worthy fathers.

On the other hand, Julio's little book had created a terrible sensation. The shrewd publisher had adopted as a title, *The Jesuits Unmasked*, adding underneath, *A Tract for the Court of Appeal*. As it was published as a book and not as a pamphlet, it was adapted for world-wide circulation, and thus was calculated to arouse in every direction the most enlightened and emphatic animosity against the famous society.

The first issue of many thousands could scarcely satisfy the eager demands of T— alone. Booksellers' agents pressed for as many more. The original lawsuit had acquired notoriety; the law intelligence of the *Indépendance Belge* had furnished an accurate account of the proceedings, also had alluded to the forthcoming appeal and pamphlet. Paris, Brussels, London, Turin, St. Petersburg even, sent in applications for large supplies. The publication acquired a European celebrity.

And it had been written by an honest man. Not a word of hatred or abuse did it contain. It did full justice to the private virtues of the order, enlarging generously on this point. But in handling their general economy, their spirit of tyranny, their insatiate avarice, their cunning and tenacious measures for securing rich bequests, its denunciations were terrible. It held up each Jesuit, from the general downward, as playing his part in the gear-catching, wheel-within-wheel complication of an immense machinery, summing up the whole gist of the argument in the words, "The Jesuits are allied by a species of freemasonry."

Perhaps Verdelon was less brilliant and glowing in his address on this occasion than he had previously been. He had no longer that great source of inspiration that had stimulated him before, as he had no farther hope of success, and had forsaken Louise; yet his words were bitterer even than before, and more crushing in their exposure of the Jesuits.

"I know not what will be the judgment of the court," he said. "I have too great a reverence for its decisions not to feel assured that it will be guided simply by conscientious conviction and a desire to maintain the law. It must be so, that the revelations which have been thrown upon this disgraceful transaction

can not carry the same weight with the bench that they do with me; and not with me only, but with whoever in Europe is watching our proceedings. Yet, apart from this, and from any farther considerations which might justify a doubt, in point of law, in the minds of the magistrates empowered to confirm or reverse the judgment of the inferior court, there will be a separate verdict in the country at large, arrived at in point of equity, and that verdict will descend upon the heads of these wrong-doers with everlasting reprobation. We have just been writing a page in contemporary history. It will be demonstrated that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, chicanery, profligacy, and spoliation have been employed for the promotion of their private greed by a body affecting the character of saints. It will be shown that a trembling girl, utterly ignorant of the world, has been induced, by the terrors of so-called religion employed for the purpose, to abandon her friends for the cloister, and at this very moment—I say it with horror—has fallen into an artful snare, after having so long resisted the cunning of a certain Father Briffard.

“Wandering out by herself, or forcibly abducted by stratagem or by violence, God only knows, she has been spirited away from her brother’s roof. Justice will, of course, have to take cognizance of this shameful deed. I, for my part, desire to be reserved upon a point which, however intimately it may be associated with the matter in hand, is as yet enveloped in mystery. Away with you, liars and cheats! Sack this half million if you will, purchased by ten blackguard years of begging, the meanest and the paltriest, of acts of baseness the most utterly scurrilous, of tricks the lowest and most despicable. Go and build your precious citadel in the middle of our town; but mark me, men, it will have cost you dear—even honor, prized by the meanest outcast in his miserable rags, and the stigma of disgrace, which, in the unbounded freedom of these courts of law, I am suffered, ere judgment is pronounced, to brand indelibly upon your brows.”

Yet his eloquence missed its mark. The Imperial Court confirmed the decision in the other prosecution. The triumph of the Jesuits was complete.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL OF THE JESUITS.

JULIO’s lawsuit had created a great interest through the whole of Europe. He had felt certain of succeeding with public opinion, even though the law should fail in proving the robbery. The real truth was that he was the victor, and his book had won him the victory.

Still, with judgment in their favor, the Jesuits rejoiced greatly as they inveighed against the accursed priest who had dared to blaspheme their holy order in one of the most eminent

cities of the South, and through the whole of France.

A very severe letter arrived from Rome. The General of the Jesuits wrote to the Provincial to say that he was at a loss to understand how it was that a priest who had dared to pen that infamous work against the eminent servants of God and the chair of St. Peter was still officiating in a French diocese; that such remissness amounted to a positive scandal, from which it was high time to deliver the Church, and that the Provincial was to call upon the archbishop in his name, and tell him how surprised he was at such a state of things existing; he was to assure him that he (the general) did not overlook the difficulties of the age, nor the tact which was necessary in a bishop toward his clergy, and his invariable predisposition to clemency; but that there were limits to the most extreme indulgence, and that leniency, when pushed too far, became complicity; that he was very far from supposing that the archbishop was indifferent to the credit of the order, but that, after the celebrity that had followed this wretched lawsuit, in which God and the Virgin had so manifestly protected the innocent society, it was right that the instigator of the original prosecution, as well as author of a publication, contemptible in itself, but calculated, nevertheless, to do much mischief, should be openly condemned by ecclesiastical authority. This step was absolutely required to show that that authority had no sympathy with his disgraceful proceedings, but, on the contrary, had, in compliance with the Church’s requirements, chastised him and proscribed his works.

He also charged the Provincial to offer the archbishop the assurance of his deepest respect, and told him that he was using all his influence to move the Sacred Congregation of the Index to condemn the Abbé Julio’s libelous publication.

Fortified with this document and the judgment just given, the Provincial proceeded to the palace. Admitted to an interview with monseigneur, he intimated to him, with much apparent humility, but with decided, though suppressed imperiousness, the pleasure of the society, without, however, making any reference to the letter he had received.

“You know,” replied the archbishop, “how M. Gagnel, myself, all the members of the chapter, and the whole body of the clergy, have sympathized with you in this matter. You know how we have rejoiced in your success.”

“I do, monseigneur.”

“I assure you, I am all but compromised with this wretched priest. I put it in his power to resist my commands. I required him—formally required him—reverend father, to abandon the appeal. But he is so abominably self-willed.”

“But at present, monseigneur—”

“You see, reverend father, I paused before proceeding to extremes. Had I punished him before the recent judgment was pronounced,

there would have been plenty of persons ready to attribute it to your influence."

"Very possibly, monseigneur; but at present?"

"At present I am greatly perplexed. I must pause and reflect before proceeding any farther. You are doubtless aware that there is a large section of the community on his side, and even of thoroughly religious men. This can not be denied."

"All the more reason, monseigneur, that your highness should not appear any longer to tolerate his proceedings."

"I tolerate them, reverend father! when I have taken this affair more to heart than your sacred company itself. It is I who am involved here, when one of my priests ventures to attack you. Yet the requirements of caution—"

The Provincial, seeing the archbishop was trying to get out of the scrape, and that he was determined not to proceed to extremities with Julio, judged it high time to avail himself of the heavy artillery which he had kept in reserve. He handed him the general's letter.

Its all but threatening tone made the archbishop feel extremely uncomfortable. He would not, for the whole world, offend the general, who, at that moment, after the reconciliation that had been effected between Pius IX. and the Jesuits, might prove such a help to him in the matter of the hat. On the other hand, he felt himself lowered. The Jesuit spoke as Pope, and appeared to menace the most illustrious dignitary as though he were an inferior.

"Write to the most reverend general, father, and tell him that ample justice will be done in the matter. Weighty considerations, perhaps scarcely existing at Rome, require us to be very much on our guard in dealing with our clergy. We know the fluctuations of power, and in any struggle that may chance to arise we are obliged to be careful how we act. But rest assured that I will give you evident proof of the indignation which I feel at the conduct of this wretched priest."

And he brought the interview to an end by a thousand sweet speeches to the Provincial, all tending to show how deeply he was devoted to the venerable society.

That very evening the following letter, in his own handwriting, was posted to Julio:

"T—, 29th September, 1860.

"MY VERY DEAR VICAR,—I want a personal interview with you on a matter of the greatest importance. Apart from my affection for all my clergy, the exceptional position in which I feel bound to place you commands my special interest. So pray come and see me, and excuse the journey, the trouble of which I greatly regret causing you.

"I shall expect you as soon as possible.

"Your affectionate and devoted

"PIERRE FRANÇOIS LE CRICQ,

"*Archbishop of T—.*

"M. l'Abbé Julio de la Clavière, Vicar of St. Avenin."

Julio was completely in the dark about that fearful scene in which Loubère had extracted an oath from the archbishop to leave his persecuted victim in peace. Hence the friendly, even loving tone of this letter puzzled him greatly. What could have come to his highness, and where were his threats?

The next day he set out for T—.

"I am exceedingly sorry, dear abbé, to have hurried you here; but I could not satisfactorily communicate with you in the present instance by writing. I felt I must see you. And now let us set out by your thoroughly understanding me. Come, speak out—did you ever imagine that I was very partial to you?"

"I can't say I ever did, monseigneur."

"Ah! you are modest there. Well, I acknowledge appearances have been against me. But, my dear abbé, just put yourself in my place for a moment. The fact is, we are so worried. So many influences are brought to bear upon us, there is such constant need of cautious management. The episcopate is no couch of roses. A good priest, quietly working in his parish, is better off far than we are. But we must bear our cross. So let that pass. And now to come to the immediate question. I have had a great deal of annoyance with reference to you. You may well believe that I have been plagued from all sides. To be plain with you, that publication of yours is scarcely to be defended. Here you were, my dear abbé, attacking an order revered in the Church; an order, as your breviary puts it, established of God in the last times to put down heresy. That's pretty plain, my dear friend. Read it for yourself."

The good man marked in his breviary the passage referred to, and handed it to Julio.

"Deum Luthero ejusdemque temporis hæreticis Ignatium et institutam ab eo societatem objecisse."

"Pretty plain words those," continued the archbishop. "And you have attacked that order. But how? If I were a mere layman, in no way interested in the matter, I should say you had ill-used them. Your book is most telling, because it is so very moderate—that, of course, between ourselves. And now there is a general outcry—every body is down upon you. What would you have me do? I have just seen a letter from Rome stating that your work had been referred to the Index. What course will you take? You'll have to submit. See, then, in what a position you will place us both. You have set the Jesuits upon me, and they will never give me a moment's peace. Are you aware that these good fathers will stand no nonsense, and that they would think no more of abusing an archbishop of T— than a vicar of St. Avenin? I know them well enough to know that. At the same time, I am resolved to convince you of the reality of my regard for you. I have no fancy for the odious task of executing their vengeance upon you. So will you do me a favor in this matter—will you oblige me? You see that I am speaking to

you without the slightest reserve. You can live creditably on your annuity—can you not? Then leave the ministry for a little time—say two or three years, if you do not mind. Ah! my dear abbé, in that period who knows what will have happened at Rome or to the Jesuits—the march of events is so rapid in our days. The issues of a year now are as many and varied as those of a century in old time. Pray grant what I ask in a friendly spirit. Write out here on my desk a little note telling me that, being anxious to recruit your health, you wish to leave the diocese for a short time. I will order my secretary to give you at once an *exeat pro quâcumque diœcesi*. When quiet has been restored; when the present crisis has developed itself; when, perchance, Garibaldi, with his red-shirts, has driven Jesuits and Index pell-mell from Rome—all which may be looked for—you can return in peace, and take some comfortable post in the diocese. Come, my very dear abbé, don't refuse me. This course will solve the difficulty. Let us arrange the whole thing like two friends."

It was impossible to resist this hyper-exquisitely civil archbishop. It was a graceful way of bowing him out of the diocese. Julio felt that he might as well submit with a good grace.

The archbishop placed a chair for him at his desk, and he wrote the application for an *exeat*.

The archbishop rang, and the secretary appeared.

"Fill up an *exeat pro quâcumque diœcesi* for M. l'Abbé Julio, vicar of St. Avenin."

"And, please, add my title, honorary canon of T—, monseigneur."

"With all my heart. Now remember you can take a fortnight or more, if you like, to settle your affairs at St. Avenin. You will let us know, by a note to my secretary, the day when the presbytery will be at liberty."

The secretary soon returned.

The archbishop embraced the young priest, and Julio left the palace: he was no longer in the diocese of T—.

The next day a paragraph in the *Star of Languedoc* announced "the Abbé Paul Caze, curate of —, as vicar of St. Avenin."

The archbishop had satisfied the Jesuits.

It is easy to account for the fatherly tone of the archbishop, his all but tenderness to the poor abbé, though Julio himself could not understand it. "Whence such unbounded deference," he asked himself. "The magnate who might have crushed him under his heel had apologized for bringing him from St. Avenin. He had written him an affectionate letter, as though he had been one of his favorite priests. His reception at the palace was gracious in the extreme. Was this nothing more than a hypocritical dodge to persuade him more easily to leave the diocese quietly, and not to compel the archbishop to severity? Nothing of the kind. The Abbé Loubère was always present to the mind of the prelate; but Julio knew nothing of the affair, nor had he the slightest idea of his name having

been associated with it in so strange a manner.

The archbishop, with all his education, intelligence, and high position, was as superstitious as an old woman. The blood of the priest, staining the grand draperies of his reception-room, and his carcass stretched on the floor before his eyes, haunted him like a constant nightmare. It seemed as though the purple he had so long desired was now before him; but it was the purple of human blood which had stained his violet robe when he himself had helped his valet, from a desire that no other servant should be cognizant of the frightful tragedy, to carry the body of Loubère to a small room adjoining the state apartments, which had been for some time unoccupied.

But it would be well to go back for a moment to that occurrence.

When Loubère, struck by the ball, had fallen on the floor, the archbishop, horrified at the spectacle, fled from the room. Just as he was crossing the antechamber, however, he paused to reflect. His valet was an elderly man, of great respectability, and thoroughly trustworthy. So he rang for Jerome, and received him himself in the outside lobby. Then carefully shutting the door leading to the staircase, he told him that an unhappy priest, suffering from an attack of the brain, brought on by the intense heat, had just committed suicide in his presence.

Jerome went to Loubère and examined his wound. By the sudden movement of his arm to avoid the archbishop, the poor victim had averted the aim. Happily, the ball, instead of piercing the brain, had taken a slanting direction, and inflicted a terrible flesh-wound—to all appearance mortal. The archbishop was most anxious to hush up a tragedy which was liable to so many painful misconstructions, should it ever be bruited abroad.

"I have a physician," he said to Jerome, "a faithful friend, on whom I can thoroughly rely. Let us lay this poor fellow on a bed and send for him. We can give it out in the house that the priest was attacked by hemorrhage in the great drawing-room. Once recovered, he can leave the palace. That plan would be better—inconvenient as it might prove—than a terrible scandal."

Jerome perfectly acquiesced. The report had not been heard at a distance, thanks to a brass band at the head of a troop of cavalry which was parading by, and also to the heavy window-curtains, which had been lowered to exclude the glare of the sun, and the shutters, which had been shut on account of the heat.

The archbishop and Jerome carried poor Loubère, more dead than alive, to the adjoining room. There they gave him some smelling salts. At length he recovered his consciousness, and was not a little surprised to find where he was, and who was at his side. The valet had gone away to fetch the doctor.

The unhappy man could not speak. The archbishop was very cautious; and being anx-

ious to promote a cure which he desired so earnestly, he contented himself with a very few gentle and fatherly words, calculated, in his belief, to have a soothing influence.

The doctor soon came. Having examined the injury, he said that though it was not positively mortal, it was, nevertheless, so severe that irritation of the brain, if not inflammation, might at any moment set in, and kill the sufferer. The wound was dressed, the flesh skillfully sewn up, and the patient left to the care of Jerome. Every care was taken that the other servants should not come near him; and when the valet was obliged to be absent, the archbishop watched him himself.

It was in those long vigils, extending often far into the night, that the archbishop, in his half-asleep moments, saw himself arrayed in red. He felt his dress, and found his violet robes steeped in the priest's blood.

From that time his visits to Loubère diminished in frequency. He was afraid of him and of himself. Sinister forebodings laid siege to his mind, and another victim of his cruelty, another poor martyr, whom he had mercilessly tormented to the utmost of his power, rose up before him, gazing at him with mild, reproachful eyes, and saying, in a low, gentle voice, "I have never threatened you. Neither my heart nor my lips have been disgraced by ill will to you. I have ever respected your high episcopal rank. But there is a God for those of the oppressed who confide themselves entirely to him."

As soon as Loubère had recovered, the archbishop prepared to send him home. After what had passed, it was but natural that the priest should ask to be dispatched to a distant diocese. M. le Cricq, on the occasion of his visit to Rome, had made the acquaintance of the Archbishop of Chambéry, and he now gave Loubère a letter of introduction to that prelate, adding, very liberally, a note for a thousand francs.

"I accept your gift, monseigneur," the priest replied; "but neither this money, nor any thing in the world, releases you from your oath. My blood must not have been shed in vain. Remember, monseigneur."

The poor, terrified archbishop dared not reply; and it was under the influence of this parting scene—not so tragical as the other, but more present to his mind—that he received the visit of the Provincial.

That day he cursed "those plaguy Jesuits" with all the energy of his soul. "They are our masters, after all," he said to himself; "the Abbé Julio is right."

But he disguised his anger, and was as smooth-tongued and obsequious as ever to the Provincial, and ready to yield to the behests of Rome. Meanwhile, harassed by remorse, with his ambition and his oath at variance, he endeavored to get Julio out of the diocese in so graceful a way as to be able to reply to the avenging shade of Loubère, should it ever rise and rebuke him, "Julio asked me to allow him to go; here is his letter."

CHAPTER IX.

JULIO FAMOUS.

THAT year the close of the season at Luchon had been unusually brilliant. The number of strangers was very great. The recent legal proceedings formed the uppermost theme of interest. Book-hawkers, who had been spending the five finest months of the year there, had speculated largely in the famous pamphlet, and circulated numerous copies. An immense placard, inscribed "The Jesuits unveiled—price one franc," drew general observation. The proscribed publication was read with avidity. The road to St. Aventin, in the direction of the Lac d'Oo, became a species of fashionable pilgrimage; and Julio's last days at his presbytery were a series of incessant ovations. Eminent men, publicists, magistrates, distinguished foreigners, esteemed it an honor to grasp the hand of the brave priest, who had nobly maintained his rights against an order so tremendous in its power and so terrible in its vengeance.

The Bishop of —, who had come to take the waters, was among his visitors, to the utter horror of the vicar of Luchon, who could not understand a prelate's venturing to hold communication with any one who was "under the ban."

But, to all his remonstrances, the reply was, "I am very partial to the worthy Abbé Julio." "Your highness is charitable in the extreme; but you will excuse my declining to accompany you."

"Why, what harm has he done you?"

"He has insulted the Church in the person of her most illustrious defenders. Look here—they are selling, in every direction, his detestable book. He has been disgraced by the praises of the *Opinion Nationale*, the *Siècle*, and the *Indépendance Belge*."

"Very serious."

"More than that, he is on the threshold of an interdict. His successor is already appointed."

"I don't think he will be interdicted. He has only fought for his rights."

"But that pamphlet of his, monseigneur—that pamphlet! I don't believe a single priest speaks to him now. Any one who attacks the Jesuits attacks us all."

"All right, my dear vicar. I see the good fathers have a zealous champion in yourself; that's quite proper. Good-by."

The bishop, who had taken a room at the presbytery, withdrew, ordering his valet to be in readiness the next morning.

He set out for St. Aventin the following day, as he had intended.

"Monseigneur," said Julio, as soon as he saw the bishop, "you will pay dear for this charitable visit of yours to a proscribed priest. You will never be a cardinal."

"Quite so," said the bishop. "But I am young, and mean to reserve myself for promotion under a different system yet to come. In that day, it is possible the Jesuits may be less powerful at Rome."

He spent the whole day at St. Aventin. Julio led him into Louise's little room.

"She is no longer there, monseigneur. What have they done with her? You see all that remains to me of my beloved sister, and will easily understand how miserable I am."

"It is quite possible that they have devised some scandalous trick to terrify her; but deeds of violence are impossible in these days."

"I trust so."

"At the same time, it would be as well for you to expedite the necessary measures for her recovery. Whether she has left you voluntarily or not, you ought to ascertain where she is. Very probably you will be more successful in your efforts than the police."

Just as the bishop was taking his leave, Julio received the following letter:

"M. L'ABBÉ,—I have not lost sight of the important subject with reference to which you intrusted me with your depositions at the magistracy. An active search has been, and is still being made through the entire French territory and in foreign countries. I may go so far as to assure you that his excellency the Minister of Justice has taken the warmest possible interest in the case, and will make special exertion in your behalf. He has just forwarded me a report, unhappily somewhat vague, from one of our Italian agents, who fancied he had recognized your sister's description in a young lady who had landed at Civita Vecchia in one of the boats of the Imperial Companies, about the middle of the month of August, with two nuns and a child apparently between thirteen and fourteen years of age. Instructions were forwarded from Paris to our agents at Rome. After long and patient secret investigation, however, it has been ascertained that the lady in question is not in the convent 'della Trinità del Monte,' the only establishment of the sisters of the Sacré-Cœur in Rome.

"This is the only trace—and it is very indefinite in connection with her—which has reached the office of the Minister of Justice.

"I should add, however, that, from the reports which we have received here at T—, we gather that, on the 14th of September, two days subsequent to your sister's disappearance from St. Aventin, a lady escorted to the little railway station of Escalquens, on the line from T—to Narbonne, a young person, plainly dressed, whose distinguished air and manners attracted general attention. Her description agrees with your sister's. She took a seat in a first-class carriage, attended by an elderly maid-servant; but we have not been able to ascertain exactly for what place she took her ticket. Our agent, who communicates this information, was struck by her singular beauty and deep dejection, and was led from that circumstance to take a note of the occurrence.

"This is no very circumstantial information, M. l'Abbé, but it has its worth. Make what use you please of it, while we, for our part, will continue our exertions.

"I am bound to add, in confidence, that not the shadow of a shade of proof has reached us—not even the faintest indication—implicating the Jesuits in this transaction.

"Receive, etc., etc."

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPORAL POWER IN TROUBLE.

THREE great events are prominent in modern history: the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the social revolution of 1789, and the downfall of the temporal power in the nineteenth century. These are three great crises in the annals of Western Europe: their motto is "Emancipation."

The papal bull burned by Luther; the rights of man proclaimed by the Convention; Pius IX., or his successor, a simple pontiff at the Vatican—such are the final achievements of that gigantic effort of the human mind which has broken the iron shell in which, during the long and painful night of the Middle Ages, the present development of the race was confined.

This struggle for freedom has lasted a thousand years. The effects of the Reformation were for a long time arrested in their progress; the Revolution of 1789 is now developing its final phases; we shall live to see the fall of pontifical royalty.

The aid which the Reformation gave to the human intellect has effected a thorough intellectual revival. It proclaimed the right of private judgment, and the kingly power of human thought. From the day of its dawn, that collective sentiment known as public opinion has been, as Pascal full well foresaw, the empress of the world.

The intellectual freedom of mind and soul from the gripe of the *magister dixit*, in which it had been held as in a vice during the Middle Ages, was Luther's grand achievement.

Social liberty, held once in perpetual subjection by the old political system, was effected by the Revolution of 1789.

The enlargement of the evangelical spirit of the Church—grotesquely allied to a pontifical imperialism—is now being effected, and will be consummated by the proclamation of Rome as the capital of united Italy.

The Reformation, intended to be wholly religious, became largely intellectual in its effects; while Italy, designing a political movement, has effected a religious regeneration.

A revolution, intellectual, social, and Christian—such is the triple produce of human thought and energy in its strike for freedom. In its material and grosser development, its only aim has been redressing wrongs, protesting against tyranny, and improving the condition of the people; when, marvel of marvels! from this conflict of varied interests, there has risen up suddenly a new world, whose character even was unknown to the majority of those

who witnessed the triumph. Little did Luther foresee that his aggression on Rome would issue in a Magna Charta for the mind of man. Little did the Convention imagine that it was establishing modern social rights on an everlasting granite base; and as little have the Italian patriots of the present day realized the sublime fact that while they were crying out for Rome as their capital, in the teeth of the ignoble jealousies of Turin, Naples, Florence, and Milan—each selfishly eager for the distinction—they were emancipating the Christian faith, which for fourteen centuries had been smothered under the white soutane of the Pontifex Maximus.

Meanwhile, effort after effort is being made to stay this glorious upheaving—the crushing of a gigantic power, the effecting a breach in that gorgeous erection of mediævalism, crowned with gold, but its feet of clay—so effectual that the least after-touch, no matter whence it may proceed—whether from a few adventurers or volunteers, or even from a simple diplomatic note, intimating the discontinuance of the customary guard at the Castle of St. Angelo—will suffice to bring down the entire colossal edifice in a cloud of dust, shaking the earth with the crash of its ponderous ruins, and convulsing Europe from the Bosphorus to the Northern Sea. Such is the climax at hand. Pope of Rome, no excommunication or anathemas of yours will ever arrest it. The breach is made, and it is widening daily. Back, if you would not be ground to powder by the ruins. Most Catholic majesties and most Christian kings, eldest sons of the Church, no might of yours will arrest it. Your ideas would be in opposition to the spirit of your age, and your white-haired and wiser councilors will tell you this, and tell you, too, that it is idle to govern by ideas. You will never prop up the tottering mass with your broad shoulders. Pontiffs, back, if you are wise! Ye who call yourselves apostles and insist upon the title, and who, in unfortunate opposition to this dogma of yours, establishing your greatness, have yielded what remained of the power of your predecessors to a single bishop, a supreme pontiff, your collective protest will be drowned in the roar of the coming storm. The world has turned a deaf ear to you. To all your uproar at Rome it has presented an indifferent front, greeting you with the crushing answer that you do not understand your age. Away to your churches, to brood a little while over the dying embers of the faith. The triumphs which you dreamed of, gorgeously arrayed in your golden mitres, have turned out other than you looked for. Bishops, bow to the revolution which is passing over papal Rome; and if among you there be one who has learned the meaning of the obedience of Christ, let him tell your brother at Rome that he will do wisely, if he would retain a shred of his greatness, to accept the magnificent presbytery of the Vatican; for on the day when popular fury bursts from its restraint, the successor of St. Peter may

have to seek refuge in some dark corner of the catacombs.

Such, at least, so far as events had then developed themselves, were Julio's thoughts, as, seated on a bench on deck, he watched the steam-boat plowing up swiftly, like a thing of life, the fair Mediterranean waves. He was bound for Rome, there to be present at the last act in that drama which has been performed since the Middle Ages, and in which the chief performer styles himself Vicar of Christ, and his subordinates cardinals and prelates. Subsequently Julio designated this expedition a visit to the death-bed of the temporal power.

CHAPTER XI.

JULIO'S WANDERINGS.

WE are now on the imperial mail steamer from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia. Julio is dressed as a layman, in sober black. He might have been taken for a magistrate, a physician, or a professor, only he made no disguise of reading his breviary. Consequently the passengers soon found out that he was a priest, a fact which he neither concealed nor proclaimed.

On board was another individual in the full garb of a French priest. It must be confessed, he did not seem to be engrossed with his breviary, but associated on easy terms with every one around him, and made himself a prominent personage; while Julio, on the other hand, in accordance with his invariable disposition, was modest and retiring. Moreover, he felt utterly uncertain as to what might be before him in his journey, and deemed it wise to reserve himself for his coming adventures.

The Abbé Denis, as the other was named, had a first-class ticket, and thought a good deal of the place of honor at the table set apart for him by the captain.

The two men were very unlike one another.

The one was candor itself, the other an impersonation of cunning, concealed under a mask of good humor. The one was of few words, and those quiet and thoughtful; the other could be heard all over the vessel, disputing every topic as it arose, and speaking of every thing to every one he came across.

Julio might have remained six months on board without addressing a single soul, unless circumstances chanced to involve him in a conversation. M. Denis had not been two hours on deck before he left his part of the vessel, and marched over boldly to where Julio was sitting, reading his breviary. Accosting him, close at his side, with a voice at full pitch, he said,

"I see you are in orders, sir. I am delighted to know it. I shall not be the only priest on board."

And, continuing the conversation,

"Of course you are going to Rome?"

"To Italy, at all events."

"Ah! I'm bound for a long journey. I

mean to make a tour of the Peninsula, town after town. Such a trip at this particular time is deeply interesting."

And, without giving Julio time to answer, he seated himself near him, and gave him a detailed account of his history, from the moment of his birth to that hour; the genealogy of the Denis family; his studies under the Jesuits; his theological course at the Lyons seminary; the various curacies he had held, including the last; his extreme dissatisfaction with the cardinal archbishop, who had been so very ill-behaved as to coop him up in an out-of-the-way corner of the diocese; his grievances against the reverend fathers, who had promised to befriend him in return for some services he had rendered them; and, finally, his resolve to have a peep at the world, an idea which he was in a position to carry out, as he had had the wit to save money for some years, while a great-uncle, whom Nature had kindly bestowed upon him as a cashier, and who had spoiled him from a baby, had been so good as to line his purse for this wonderful journey, in which he anticipated such unqualified enjoyment. As far as he was concerned, he wished to study the various social, political, religious, and administrative questions which might come under his eye; to do Etruscan and Roman architecture; to visit the great schools of sculpture and painting; to have a fling at geology, coin-ology, and botany, and, if he had a chance, a little taste of agriculture.

Already our friend had drained the Pontine Marshes, annihilated the malaria, covered the desert round Rome with blooming villas, deepened the bed of the Tiber, enthroned Victor Emmanuel on the Quirinal, and the Pope in happy contentment at the Vatican (having previously arranged an amicable meeting between the two for the exchange of the royal accolade), freed forever from the cares of empire, and broken loose from his beloved Antonelli.

To all this verbal torrent Julio submitted quietly, almost coldly; not, however, without a touch of that French curiosity which is ever ready for news.

What has just been related transpired on deck on the morning of their embarkation, while the red cliffs of Provence were slowly receding with their sharp indented edges, which assumed in the distance the appearance of old ruined cities rising from a conflagration.

The Abbé Denis came and went as and where he pleased; chatted with the captain as though he had known him for twenty years; was wondrously polite to the ladies; profoundly obsequious to his elders, and merry and off-hand with those of his own age, or any whom he took to be younger than himself.

In the afternoon he returned to his old place by Julio.

"Here I am again, my dear abbé."

The acquaintance had evidently developed rapidly.

"Upon my word," he continued, "you have taken my fancy mightily. Here have I been

spinning a tremendous yarn to you, and you have listened to my jabber with the most exemplary patience. Unhappily, loquacity is my weak point; yet it is one's only diversion on a journey. You may talk about any thing. Might I ask you to what diocese you belong?"

"The diocese of T——, M. l'Abbé."

"You don't mean to say so? an old town that; very celebrated. A Capitol in it, isn't there?"

Julio couldn't help smiling. "The fellow has missed his line," he said to himself; "he was born a commercial traveler."

"You were a curate in the town, I suppose?"

"No, I had a parish of my own in the Pyrenees."

"Ah! fine country that, but terribly sharp winters, I am told. Am I right?"

"Not so very sharp."

"And, if I am not taking too great a liberty, your name?"

"Is of no importance whatever."

"Still—"

"Julio de la Clavière."

"Julio! Julio! wait a minute. Surely I know that name. Stay, don't let me forget. Might you be the author of a famous pamphlet I bought at Lyons, called *The Jesuits Unveiled*?"

"I am, sir."

"Is it possible? what a happiness! Why, I am fated to have lucky meetings. Well, here's a chance for me, to encounter the veritable abbé who gave the Jesuits that tremendous castigation."

"A well-deserved one."

"I should just think so; too well deserved. Oh, the scamps, I don't love them a bit better than you do. Our Lyons clergy hate and detest them, and they us. There's no love lost between us, I assure you. The cardinal is afraid of them. Don't they just catch it at our clerical reunions!"

"I differ from you there. I respect them as priests, because, as a rule, they deserve to be respected. What I complain of is the dangerous spirit of their order."

"Quite so, quite so; exactly what I meant to say. Oh, I thoroughly went with you while I read your book. But they are not all of them saints; there are some tolerably free and easy specimens among them, I give you my word for it."

"I don't altogether agree with you."

"You are very charitable, then, that's all I can say. They are fellows whom you'll never fathom till you know them inside out."

The everlasting Abbé Denis came back again in the evening.

"We have been talking about you at dinner," he said. "The captain has read your book, and says it's a stinging bit of print. There were a few suspicious-looking parties present, who made wry faces, I can tell you. But he and I fought for you. One must never be cowardly to one's friends. 'Whoso toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.' Now, what do you suppose a

country squire sort of fellow, who is on a Jesuit mission to Rome, had the impudence to say? Why, he called the book 'a wretched pamphlet.' 'A *what* pamphlet?' I cried out, as quick as need be, flooring my friend with a look he didn't admire. Most probably he is going to enlist in the Pontifical Zouaves. By the way, not such a bad notion that of mine. That explains how's how. Aristocratic families often have a hang-over on they don't know what to do with, and so they tell him to go and be a Pontifical Zouave. The Jesuits frank him. The Pope is glad of his services. After the ne'er-do-well has had a rough time of it under Mérode, he'll go back, an ecclesiastical hero, to his horses and dogs."

Julio was utterly taken aback. He couldn't imagine where this man got his cataract of words, pouring them out with as great ease as a fountain its streams of water.

"A queer fellow," he thought. "A convenient companion, however, for he does all the talking. After all, he's not so bad, I fancy."

Julio was charitable in the extreme, and dispositions like his are never suspicious. They are ready with endless excuses for every species of infirmity or defect. He looked upon the priest as an oddity, it was true; but then, he argued, the Lyonnese are naturally communicative and self-satisfied. So he set him down as a specimen of the class, and nothing more.

Unfortunately, this powerful talker was one of the most inquisitive and imprudent of men. He managed so well; was so clever at pressing an inquiry, and contrived to get round Julio in such a manner that he elicited from him the object of his journey, which was to discover his sister, if possible, who, he believed, was in a convent in the Roman States.

"I told you I had good reason not to be fond of the Jesuits. I am not vindictive, but—"

"Possibly they have nothing whatever to do with the affair. Some fanatical friends—"

"My dear abbé, you are very simple. Yes, there is little doubt that they have their devoted agents. But, believe me, the whole thing was contrived in Loyola's workshop."

And Julio kept saying to himself, "What a queer fellow he is!"

"See, now," said Denis, "if I were you, I should not go to a dozen places after my sister. Depend upon it, she's at Rome, as certainly as we two are on the Mediterranean; and if I were there, I could soon find out the convent in which she is imprisoned."

"Not so easily as you think."

"Wouldn't I, that's all. Why, if it were my case, I'd ferret out my sister from under the very nose of the general himself."

Julio began to get tired of the language, style, and familiarity of his companion. He rose, bowed slightly, and withdrew to his cabin.

On reaching Civita Vecchia, his first care was to repair to the agent of the French police, for whom he had a letter from the sous-procureur impérial at T—. The official, naturally most polite, placed himself entirely at his serv-

ice, ready to help him, if not by efforts—for up to that time there had been no result from the search—at all events, by advice gathered from his experience of the Roman States.

"In this country," he said, "ours are almost the only police; but they are very active at Rome; and if they have failed to trace your sister in the slightest degree, you may depend upon it she has not been brought there, or, at all events, she made no stay there. It is very rare that a strange face—least of all a woman's—escapes us. Moreover, you can easily understand that if, as you suppose, the Jesuits are at the bottom of the mischief, they would not be such bunglers as to bring your sister to a place where certainly their influence is supreme, but where, as they know full well, they are closely watched. What an idea, for instance, to suppose that a lady who had been treacherously kidnapped would be deposited in the convent of the Sacré-Cœur, 'alla Trinità del Monte'—a convent incessantly visited by all the fashionable world, where every thing is carried on in broad daylight, and where no one could be hidden for twenty-four hours! My full conviction, after all the search we have made at Rome, is, that it is utterly useless for you to go there. It would be time and money lost. But, if I am not mistaken, the Jesuits, who have branch establishments in every direction, have concealed her in one of the old provincial convents—those little citadels where every thing is carried on in the style of days gone by, which retain and exercise the right of asylum, where the police have no access, and where, beyond all question, any one might reside forever without being detected. That's what I believe to be the real state of the case, and I do not hesitate to advise you to be guided by my experience. Don't go to Rome, unless you wish it for your own pleasure; but make an expedition through the country, as a tourist, or an archæologist, or even a genteel peddler, if you like, that you may have readier access wherever you may desire it. Always speak Italian; you will soon be familiar with it. The Pontifical States consist only of four provinces—Civita Vecchia, where we are; Viterba, to the north of us; Frosinona, south, on the Neapolitan frontier; and Rome, in the centre. The whole territory is about fifty leagues long by fifteen wide—the extent of two French departments. It will be easily explored, and just now the roads are safe enough. Go and see plenty of churches. Assume some character or other—either as a priest, a picture-seller, or an archæologist paying a visit to the antiquities of the country; in that way, no one will suspect you, and chance, or rather the providence of God, will aid you. The country is full of episcopal palaces and convents. Go every where; examine every thing; get to know the entire establishment in every separate house. Be cautious. You seem quiet and reserved—two qualities most indispensable in dealing with Italians, who are wonderfully sharp, and suspect every one they speak to. Good-by for the

present. Come and see me at any time, under any circumstances. My orders, and those of all my agents, are positive to assist you by every means in our power."

Julio thanked him very cordially, and took his leave. He had scarcely left the door when the agent recalled him, and said, in a very low tone,

"On reflection, I ought to warn you to be strictly on your guard in this country, especially at Rome, if you think of going there. We know that the Jesuits have their police as well as ourselves. They are doubtless aware at this present moment that you are in Italy. It is their interest to ruin you. If you were a layman, you might defy them in every thing but assassination; but as you are in orders, they have full power to bring you within reach of the Inquisition. Nothing is simpler than to compass the destruction of a priest at Rome. He is charged with some offense beyond the pale of the civil tribunals, and is handed over to the Holy Office in the name of ecclesiastical privilege. I have said enough. You understand me. I may add that the French police have no power over that tribunal. Terrible tales are told of it, though it is said to have been worked more mildly since the accession of Pius IX.; but don't risk it. And, I beseech you, never tell a single soul that I have given you this advice. From hearing the Italian speak with bated breath of the Santa Inquisizione, even we French have got to feel uncomfortable about it, and make a point of having nothing to do with it. However, you interest me deeply. Be discreet and prudent. Good-by once more, and God speed you on your search."

CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUATION OF JULIO'S WANDERINGS.

THE first person Julio encountered on turning into the street was the Abbé Denis.

"Are you starting for Rome?"

"Most certainly not."

"I'll lay any thing you've been advised not."

"Just so."

"Then your friends have humbugged you, and you'll suffer for it."

"Stuff and nonsense! What object could they have in humbugging me?"

"Who can tell? There is such a thing as a police playing two games."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of that."

"Come, you're a bit too close. You have just come from the French agent's?"

"How do you know?"

"Oh, a mere accident."

"Well, I have; and he has strongly dissuaded me from wasting my time in a fruitless search at Rome."

"Very well; do as he advises you. But I maintain that your only chance is in that quar-

ter. However, it's no good trying to serve people against their inclination. So good-by for the present. We shall meet again."

"Perhaps so."

"I want to commence my tour in that part of the old Etruria which is renowned for its antiquities."

"Success, then. Good-by!"

The first thing Julio did was to trace out his journey. He resolved to visit all the country north of the Roman States—Corneto, Civitella, Viterba, Civita Castellana, and the districts adjoining them. Then he would go southward, to Tivoli, Velletri, Terracina, and Frosinona.

Slightly changing his dress, he assumed the disguise of an itinerant dealer. His next step was to hunt out one of those shops, frequent in large towns, in which relics and devotional treasures from the Holy Land are exposed for sale. There he purchased a large stock of rosaries in olive-wood and thorn-tree—all blessed at Jerusalem; mother-of-pearl carvings representing scenes in the Gospels, crucifixes, little medals and crosses—naturally thinking that they would procure him a ready entrance into convents, and enable him to make accurate inquiries as to the various persons inside, without exciting any suspicions.

Meeting with one of those slight, strong, quiet horses, admirably adapted for expeditions like his, he considered himself fully equipped for his journey, and, taking the northern road, repaired to Corneto.

Poor Julio had no very encouraging start; he met every where a most icy reception. However, he managed to get inside one or two convents, and prosecuted his inquiries with considerable difficulty, and no result.

He found the Abbé Denis, too, at Cornetò, like a bird of ill omen, installed in the principal hotel of the town.

"Ah! my dear fellow," said he, "you're got up in a new style. Why, I'm in the country of my true sovereign now, so I show my colors on all possible occasions."

"You're a wonderful person altogether," said Julio, and turned on his heel.

The fact was, the man bothered him. He liked independence of character in a priest when it was combined with refinement and a sense of propriety, but he had an utter aversion to those fussy, officious talkers that pass among the clergy as pleasant fellows. Our friend M. Denis had counted on winning Julio's regard by his free-and-easy manner, and succeeded in securing his contempt.

From Corneto our pilgrim proceeded to Toscanella, a little town abounding in interest, like all in that part of the Roman States, as much from the remains of art to be found on every side as from the singular appearance of its mediæval houses, and especially its square towers of prodigious height, erected here and there within the walls, and intended, so it was said, to serve as places of protection in civil wars.

Julio knew that the generality of Italian

towns boasted their miscellaneous dealers—half scholar and half broker—who visited large houses and convents to collect paintings in enamel, medals, old china, bronzes, etc. These men are thoroughly acquainted with the neighborhood, and very obliging to strangers, whom they hope to allure into the purchase of some Etruscan vase artistically got up, or some bronzes wrought in imitation of antique, which they have oxydized themselves, and coolly offer to customers as works of the greatest antiquity. The cheat is practiced in open day all through Italy. Nor is there a solitary town where the *fiacchini* fail to produce some little statue or other, covered with rust, which they offer, with an air of ludicrous solemnity, as a most invaluable article.

There was one of these gentlemen in Toscanella, a specimen of the class. Certainly he had in some slight degree studied Roman antiquities, but he was not a bit the richer for that, living, as he did, from hand to mouth, on the produce of what he sold. We may add that he was an honest man, in which respect he proved an exception to the rule, and that he never exhibited a pretended antiquity.

Carlo Vallini received a speedy visit from Julio on the arrival of the latter at Toscanella. Our hero purchased a few small antiquities recently dug up in the old necropolis of the town, where the old Romans earn a questionable livelihood by disturbing the dust of their forefathers, and then entered into conversation with the dealer.

"You must know the country well, Signor Carlo."

"I think, eccellenza, that during the forty years that I have lived in this glorious land, I have left but little of it unvisited. We are living over the ruins of a great civilization. Ah! the Etruscans were a religious, brave, artistic . . ."

"Quite so; but they interest me less than the present condition of the religious orders in Italy. That's my hobby, you understand. We can not give our attention to every thing."

"Perfectly true, eccellenza. Defend me from gentlemen of universal attainments; they know *nothing*. I have my hobby too, and I can tell you I pursue it eagerly. It is partly yours, only I go farther back. 'A Jove principium.' I have a mass of documents on this great question of theological seminaries, monasteries, nunneries, etc., ranging from the remotest date down to the institution of such establishments under Catholicism, and I shall be delighted to place them at your service."

"Thank you, signor, only I have not your learning. I am merely studying statistical researches."

"In this MS. you will find some curious things, throwing great light on ancient paganism, and the substitution of the clergy and Christian institutions for the pontificate and priesthood of the old religion. Rome has ever been pre-eminently the religious city. Unhappily,

her priesthood there is so powerful that the Pontifex Maximus has been estimated the equal of an emperor. And when Rome had her popes, her pontiffs of the new faith, converted emperors, like Constantine and his successors, preserved the important title of Pontifex Maximus for the sake of the vast revenues and honors attached to it. It was not till Gratian that this ambitious title, which had been arrogated so defiantly in the face of the bishops of Rome, ceased to exist. If, at the present day, Rome holds so much to the idea of perpetuating her mediæval state, it is because this strange medley of temporal and spiritual power is exactly adapted to her views. The popular notion is that it is the popes that are the kings of Rome; a most egregious error. The sceptre is far before the keys. His Holiness has an infinitely greater regard for his armed escort, the mark of his imperial dignity, than for the household prelates who are in constant attendance upon him, worrying him to bless crosses and rosaries. The Pope, in the zenith of his power in the days of old, was the first sovereign in Europe. And this monarch, as in the case of men of the stamp and character of Julius II., deigned to adopt the papal robes under their coat of mail. It was a case of Cæsar, emperor and sovereign pontiff. Even our mild and amiable Pius IX., with all his meekness, would at any moment sacrifice the pontifical for the imperial diadem; so don't be astonished at the resoluteness with which our clerical government are standing aloof from the Italian party. Pretty much they care for a united Italy when they have a far higher interest of their own. The union of the pontifical with the prelatial element is more to their advantage—a fact which you Frenchmen don't take in, but which we poor Romans, here on the spot, can't help understanding. Our priests—forgive the innocent pun—are fighting for their altars and hearths."

"Ah! perhaps so. Doubtless this political question—"

"Excuse me, eccellenza, all in due time. I was saying that ancient Rome had greatly developed the religious element. Her political system was largely associated with it; for religion will suffice for a time as an engine of popular government. So long as the positive sciences forbear to poke their noses, spectacle-bedstrid, into every question as it starts up—so long as men are free from the fatal tendency to criticize and analyze every problem submitted to their faith, the simplest course to be adopted by those who hold the reins is to work well on superstitious fears. That will do for a time without having recourse to the dagger and scaffold; but let man once become his own master—"

"Very true, Signor Carlo; but couldn't you—"

"I understand. Well, let us dismiss these general questions. It is not generally known, even by learned men, that ancient Rome had twenty times as many temples and shrines ded-

icated to the gods as there are in modern Rome to all the saints in Paradise. If you could explore with me the fourteen districts into which the city on the seven hills is divided, or, rather, to speak more correctly, on the ten hills, you would be amazed at the quantity of temples, *funæ, delubra, ædes, ædicula*, consecrated to heathen deities. In the first, the Porta Cassena, there were four temples—of Isis, of Serapis, of Fortune (goddess of travelers), of Mars, outside the walls, besides six *ædes* and ten *ædicula*. The second, the Cœli Montium, had five temples—of Tullus Hostilius, Bacchus, Faunus, Claudius, and the goddess Carnea, with eight *ædicula*.”

“But all these details—”

“Exactly. But to come to the point. The third had two temples of Isis and Serapis, *Moneta*, and the famous temple of Concord, with eight *ædicula*. The fourth had ten temples. We need not mention the *ædicula*.”

“Certainly not, signor. Indeed, you would oblige me—”

“The fifth, Esquilina, had seventeen temples, among which was the famous Parthenon. The sixth, Alta Semita, had seventeen. But I am afraid I am exhausting your patience.”

“You really are; please cut it short.”

“The eighth, that of the Forum, had twenty-one temples, ten *ædes*, and twelve *ædicula*. You see, this is most valuable information.”

Julio was more terribly tried than he had ever been in his life. He was afraid of offending the tiresome pedant; however, he couldn't help interrupting him once more,

“But, my excellent friend—”

“Please observe that there are many whose site is as yet unknown to learned men, and which we should rejoice to discover, as, for instance, that of Fortuna Virgo, of Jupiter Victor, of Juno, of Venus, and of twenty others. I have pursued an eager search, and I can fill a space in the list by determining where Fortuna Virilis stood, namely, on the ground now occupied by the column of the Immaculate Conception. What do you think now of that coincidence?”

“That it is full of the deepest interest. At the same time—”

“Patience, eccellenza. I said before that we must advance step by step—an invariable rule in all scientific questions. Now, as for the divinities themselves, of course you are familiar with those lines of Ennius on the twelve deities forming “the sacred college” of Jupiter:

“Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercurius”

“Pray excuse me, but—”

“The general belief has always been that Jupiter was the chief in heaven; but that's a mistake. I have investigated that question thoroughly, and come to the conclusion that, among the Etrurians, the principal deity, the most illustrious, in point of fact, the self-begotten forefather of all, was Janus, or Ianus, a name, most indisputably, of Greek origin. If you take away the aspirate from the Greek word

kaivew, you have *aiuew*, that is to say, the eternal, the chief. He was the founder of the human race—whence his title, the Sower. The most celebrated of his temples was that dedicated to “Janus Quadrifrons,” where the head of his statue was represented with four faces, answering to the four points of the compass; a type, you see, of his dignity as the primeval chief.”

Julio felt that he was fairly in for it, as the discussion showed no prospect of coming to an end. He saw that he would have to bring his man, by slow degrees, to a question which interested him rather more than the twelve great gods.

“You were speaking,” he observed, “of the religious orders of antiquity.”

“I was. Faunus, son of Saturn, and king of Latium, was the first to institute temples, sacred groves, sacrificial altars, and colleges of priests. Of these, the oldest that I can discover is that of the Luperci, who sacrificed to Pan, or the universal God. The college of brethren, called by Varro the *Arvales*, is of very remote date. They were established, it is said, by Acca Laurentia, the foster-mother of Romulus—a statement of the historians which I take to be a mere false compliment. I could easily show that their date was much older. Their number was twelve; their dress, a white garment and a wheat chaplet. Their college is the type of all religious houses, ancient and modern. I assure you, nothing is changed in Rome except in name. These Luperci, clothed in the skins of newly-sacrificed beasts, reappear in our Capuchin friends, with their bare feet, and dress in appearance very much the same.”

Poor Julio was but little interested in all this learned lore, but he was afraid to venture an interruption, so anxious was he to arrive at that invaluable information which he sought from this living encyclopædia. So he held his tongue, watching for an opportunity to put in a word here and there by way of recalling his informant to the main question. Meanwhile, the antiquary traveled on, undaunted, in his gratuitous lecture.

“Then came the college of the Haruspices, celebrated in all Etruria, and among the earliest religious institutions.”

“Perhaps you might give me fewer details: I am most unwilling to encroach upon your time.”

“Oh! my dear sir, my time is entirely at your disposal.”

“But mine, Signor Carlo, is very precious.”

“Ah! that's another matter. Then I will omit reference to the college of the Flaminians; and, with much regret, the deeply interesting points connected with the Vestals. Those priestesses, so venerated in Rome, custodians of the sacred fire, were the first of the religious female orders, such as the Carmelites of our day.”

“Good,” thought Julio; “he is coming round at last. Signor Carlo, I should feel greatly obliged if you would kindly aid me in investigating the actual position of the religious orders

in the Roman States. I am anxious to secure statistical details on this point, for we in France have very hazy notions respecting them."

"Most happy; I have it all at my fingers' ends. At Civita Vecchia there are Franciscans, Hieronymites, Carmelites, and Capuchins; at Corneto, Benedictines, Carmelites, and Capuchins. You will find Capuchins every where, not to mention Jesuits."

"Would you give me a detailed list of the various nunneries?"

"Certainly. I have a tabulated catalogue of them, arranged according to their localities and various designations. Wait a moment, eccellenza."

And the interminable old man, putting his hand on a huge file of manuscript, drew forth a thick folio, such as he had described.

"That's exactly what I want, most excellent signor."

"Then follow my lists carefully. First, you have the great Benedictine order, whose headquarters are at Mount Cassin. You may study all particulars with reference to them—the date of the foundation of their various houses; the name of their founder; the revenue of each convent—it is all down here. The extensive family of St. Francis is among the largest of any, as being the most popular. Then comes the order of St. Augustin—all carefully classified, you see. If you would like to take more hasty notes, here is an abridged summary, compiled, I can assure you, with great trouble. However, a good catalogue is as valuable as a good book. Here are the details you ask—Augustines, Benedictines, Capuchins, Carmelites, Cistercians, etc., etc. I have added in an Appendix the more recent associations—the Sacré-Cœur; the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, of St. Charles, of St. Thomas de Villeneuve, of St. Joseph, etc., etc."

"A most admirable work, and highly creditable to your talents and perseverance. May I take a few notes?"

"Most certainly, eccellenza."

And Julio, confident at last of getting the fullest possible information, took down carefully the position of all the nunneries in the Roman States.

"You have been quick about it, eccellenza. And as to payment, if you will take these little statuettes, that will settle every thing between us."

And this was the humble issue of his endless discourse on days and things gone by. The antiquarian topic at an end, he was a poor dealer again. Julio made some purchases as a matter of form, and paid him whatever he asked.

The accurate information he had just received convinced him that he must continue his present route; accordingly, he started for Valentano.

Just as he was leaving the Albergo Nuovo, a head popped out of an upper window of the hotel. It belonged to the Abbé Denis.

"Pleasant journey, dear abbé."

"That fellow haunts me like my own shadow," muttered Julio, not over-pleased.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MEETING.

FURNISHED with his invaluable directory, his heart full of hope, he made for Valentano. In that place was a wealthy and powerful Benedictine convent. It had a magnificent church, enriched with an immense entrance porch, and built after the designs of Bernini, the pride of the daughters of St. Benoît; and although after the French invasion, and under the Republic, the monastery had not been so prosperous as before, nor yet so numerous or influential in its members, it was still the most flourishing in the States of the Church. Julio felt that he must commence his search in this quarter, as possibly Louise was there.

Valentano is a small frontier town, standing away from the high road, in the midst of a charming and most healthy country. Something told Julio that his heart's treasure was not very far off. At all events, it was absolutely necessary that he should halt here, get admitted into the convent, and see all that he could. But to effect this was his great difficulty. He would obtain an interview with the reverend mother, offer his goods, and get up a little small talk on the various holy places round. He was clever enough, at all events, to manage that much. Yet even for this he would require some nerve. He was not quite so brazen-faced or talkative as his friend Denis. That evening he wandered about from room to room of the Osteria della Campa, where he had established himself, like a troubled spirit, not knowing what saint to invoke to aid him in obtaining details as to the *personnel* of the Benedictine establishment.

At length he rang up the landlord.

"You have a splendid convent here."

"Yes, very splendid, signor."

"Plenty of members?"

"Twelve nuns; eight lay sisters."

"The nuns—do they all belong to this country?"

"I don't understand you."

"Any foreigners among them?"

"Possibly; we outsiders know nothing about them." Said in a dry tone, intimating a desire to stop the cross-examination.

"He is a Piedmontese spy," thought the landlord.

Julio had no better luck with the landlady, a plump young woman, ensconced in a sort of large sofa. All he could get out of her was,

"We know nothing at all about it, signor."

"He is an anti-convent gentleman," she said to herself—"a revolutionary agent."

It even struck her that it would be as well if she crossed herself. She was a penitent of Father Antonio, the Benedictine confessor.

Julio returned to his apartment thoroughly disheartened. A sharp, active girl, with an intelligent eye, was bringing some cold water and sugar which he had ordered. What if he entered into conversation with her? She was

sure to be well informed. He resolved to do so.

"Tell me, my good girl—you belong to Valentano, don't you?"

"Yes, signor."

"A beautiful place! and what a fine convent it has!"

"Oh, the exterior is nothing, signor; you should see the inside. The splendid cloister—the glorious paintings! That's the place for sweet Madonnas! The walls of the Church are all gilded, and the nuns' rooms are so beautifully decorated! they are like little chapels! Oh, they are happy creatures, that they are!"

"Then you've been there occasionally?"

"Occasionally! over and over again! I left it a week ago. I was engaged to wait upon a young lady who had come there from Rome by the doctor's order. This is a very healthy country, signor, you see."

"Was she tall?"

"Yes, very tall."

"And beautiful?"

"Yes, as beautiful as a Madonna."

"Could she speak Italian?"

"Not a word. So we couldn't understand each other. A great pity, wasn't it, signor? After I had been there three days, the reverend mother told me I was very stupid, and couldn't get on with the young lady at all; and I was sent about my business. Fortunately for me, I got this place—a very good one."

"Could the lady speak French?"

"I think so."

"You don't happen to know her name?"

"I heard it two or three times, but I've forgotten it."

"Wasn't it Louise?"

"I fancy it was. She looked very sad, very weary, and very white. Her chest, they said, was diseased."

This was all the information Julio could get out of the girl.

"Good evening, signor," she said, as she withdrew with a bright smile.

"Tall—beautiful—and perhaps her name is Louise. Why, that must be my sister! Chest affected! mountain air ordered by the doctors! that's all a make-up of the Jesuits to account for her removal. Doesn't know a word of Italian. Had she staid at Rome or any other town, she would have picked up enough to make this servant understand her. It's Louise! it's Louise!"

And in the delirium of joy which the conviction brought, he began pacing his apartment with feverish steps.

"This room is so stuffy, it's enough to suffocate one. Bah! let's have some fresh air."

The night was coming on, but it wasn't dark yet. He passed the entrance of the church, which opened on the small but well-built public place. Thence he plunged into some narrow streets round the monastery. On his return to the "place" a voice greeted him from the church porch.

"How d'ye do, M. l'Abbé? How are you getting on? Have you succeeded in your search?"

It is needless to say whose voice it was. Gentle and affable as Julio usually was, there were moments in which he found it difficult to restrain his impatience. He hastened forward.

"Sir, may I ask what my affairs have to do with you? I should be exceedingly obliged if you would have the goodness to desist from shouting after me 'M. l'Abbé' in every town I pass through. Singular though it may be that our journeys coincide so exactly, oblige me by treating me as a stranger henceforth."

"This was a mistake on Julio's part. It was not necessary to make an enemy of a fellow-countryman, who, after all, had as full a right as himself to pay a visit to the mountains of Etruria.

"I won't call you 'abbé' any longer. Good-by, sir. Perhaps we shall meet again."

The words were spoken in a tone sufficiently bitter and inimical to have put our hero on his guard.

The next day Julio presented himself to the reverend mother at the convent.

She was about fifty-five, with a mild clear eye, delicate rosy lips, an ashy complexion—the only mark of beauty's decay in the shadow of the cloister—a perfectly smooth brow, most undeniable hands, and an air of chaste tranquillity. The graceful Benedictine might have sat to a master, and his task would have been a worthy one.

She received Julio with a graceful reserve, habitual to well-trained ladies in the presence of strangers.

"I have brought you, reverend mother, some sacred reminiscences of the Holy Land. I have rosaries made out of olive-wood from the Garden of Olives, by the venerable Franciscan proprietors of the place. They have surrounded the spot with a wall. Some of the trees are said to be so old as to warrant the belief that they were standing in our Lord's time. I can vouch for the accuracy of all my assertions."

This little address was delivered in such a straightforward tone of voice, and the air of the speaker was so thoroughly truthful, that the lady superior proceeded at once to inspect his treasures, which he proceeded to spread out on a round mosaic table from Florence, of great value, and which, with a few easy-chairs, covered with white silk, embroidered with flowers, constituted the furniture of the room. As his taste was excellent, he had selected from the shop at Civita Vecchia several articles of artistic merit, on the chance of being able to dispose of them during his adventurous expedition. Among these were some beautiful mother-of-pearl carvings; elegant reliquaries, the relics themselves, however, being of very dubious origin—as, for instance, a few hairs of the Virgin, some camel's-hair from the girdle of John the Baptist, a piece of St. Anne's sandals, and of the manger at Bethlehem. The lady appeared

desirous of purchasing the whole stock—which would not have been at all convenient to our hero—so delighted was she with every thing she saw. At a signal from her, all the nuns, who were having their usual recreation in the cloister, flocked in.

"Oh, mother, mother, what beautiful rosaries!"

"What exquisite things!"

"Oh, do look at those charming reliquaries! How sweet they'd look on the altar of the Madonna! Wouldn't they, Sister Agnes?"

"Won't you buy some of those lovely mother-of-pearl things, mother?"

Julio looked about him with eager eyes. There were a few lovely Roman girls among them, innocently indulging, in this brief opportunity permitted them of intercourse with a stranger—only a peddler after all—that desire to please which is the charm of the sex. Notwithstanding his strange disguise, Julio had the dignified mien of a high-born gentleman. Though he could assume a humble dress, he could not lay aside his thoughtful and refined expression, his gentle and polished tone of voice, and that unmistakable air of good breeding which is so easily detected. His very silence, his bashfulness, the evident indifference with which he offered his various goods for sale, gave him at once the appearance of a disguised lover, waiting for an opportunity to bestow a glance or a letter on some gentle damsel by stern parental decree consigned to the cloister. He was not likely to be easily forgotten at the convent.

Having taken in every face before him, he saw at once that they were all strangers. But where was Louise? Possibly she was not in the cloister with the others; she might be confined in her apartment. Perhaps she was really ill, after all. His heart was so strangely disturbed that he could scarcely reply to the various questions put to him. Not wishing to sell his goods, he had put an outrageous price upon them; but this only made the lady superior more eager to purchase. At length a selection was made; she had already opened her purse. What was he to do? what could he say, in order to get a peep at the stranger? How was he to manage it? As to leaving the place without making some effort in the matter, that was out of the question. He lifted up his heart in secret prayer, and then summoned courage enough to say, in a tolerably calm tone of voice, though not without betraying in some measure his inward excitement,

"If the young lady who has been staying here for some time would like—"

The lady superior eyed him sternly.

"How do you know, sir, that we have any such young lady here? Sisters, you may retire; you are a spy, sir; your agitation betrays you; pray have the goodness to leave this place. We have already been advised, in a letter from Rome, that there was a person on the track of the young lady whom her family have intrusted to our care."

And bowing with marked coldness, she left the poor fellow to pack up his wares, and withdrew through an inner door. A lay sister escorted him to the entrance, and shut the gate behind him.

No sooner was he gone than the reverend mother made strict inquiries, through Father Antonio, as to who and what he was. Among other things, his conversation with his landlord and landlady convinced her that he was the gallant against whom she had been warned.

If Julio was intensely disgusted at his ill success, he was not the less delighted at the thought that his treasure was in that convent. "What though I have to climb the walls," he said to himself, "to throw myself headlong into the place, to terrify every one I may meet on my way to my sister's apartments, I don't care. All I have to do is to say out loud, that every one may hear, 'I am after my sister, my beloved sister, who has been torn from my arms by inhuman wretches.' All Valentano will be on my side."

His idea was spirited and worthy of himself. At first he saw only the chivalrous side of the question. On reflection, however, he discovered how great were the difficulties in his way; and, as often happens in similar cases, he passed at once from his first enthusiasm to all the uncertainty of mistrust.

Supposing he were to make an attempt to get into the place, the police would be after him, he would be caught in the act, tried with closed doors, and then the galleys, and a long farewell to his promising scheme. Would it not be more prudent, he thought, to ascertain for a certainty whether Louise was there or not? That point once decided in the affirmative, the French ambassador would soon settle the rest, more especially in a country where, through the powerful influence of the Jesuits, his unaided personal efforts would be of little or no use.

It was a sensible line of conduct, and Julio resolved upon it. Meanwhile a bright idea suddenly occurred to him.

"I will write to her. A little gold will always find a trusty messenger in Italy. I am in a country of adventures, so I must be up to the spirit of the thing. Bravo! Εὐρηκα!"

And, taking his pen, he indited the following letter:

"DEAR LOUISE,—Here I am, close to you, at Valentano. Oh, how wretched I have been since you left St. Aventin! You, too, must have suffered terribly. However, I have found you out at last. The French police have been making vain inquiries after you, though they succeeded in ascertaining that, on quitting Marseilles, you sailed for Civita Vecchia with two nuns. Just see how a gracious God has led me here, and let us thank him together. You had better acquaint the reverend mother with your determination to see me at any risk. Meanwhile, be patient; the French ambassador will put every thing right.

"Your loving brother, JULIO."

Having written his letter, his next step was to find a clever and trusty messenger. The young servant occurred to him: he summoned her to his apartment on pretense of wanting some refreshment.

"Here is a gold piece for you," he said, "if you will undertake to deliver this letter into the hands of the young lady you mentioned to me. Can you do this?"

"Nothing easier, sir. Sister Scolastica, who is very fond of me, will admit me at once to her room."

"Very well. Bring me an answer, and I'll double the reward."

The girl reached the convent at the same time as Julio had arrived the evening before—while the nuns were taking exercise in the cloister. She rang the bell, asked for Sister Scolastica, slipped quietly into the parlor, and entreated her friend to let her see the lady whom she had previously waited on, that she might give her the nosegay of flowers in her hand. Sister Scolastica, being old, deaf, and half blind—the only one in the convent, perhaps, who was not full of Julio's visit—saw no reasonable objection to humoring what appeared to her a mere childish fancy, and conducted the girl to the stranger's apartment.

There is a little of the Sabine element in the Roman blood. The affair of the handsome peddler—for such was Julio's title at the convent—had taken violent hold of the Benedictine brain. What if he succeeded in forcing an entrance! "My lady's chamber" was in a secluded part of the building, and opened on to the garden. Suppose they were in league together! Only fancy, a scaling-ladder and accomplices! The whole thing was a drama to their Italian minds, but a drama of the highest and most praiseworthy character. "She is a happy girl to have a lover," said some of them in a very, very undertone. What a blessing to hear the words, "I have rescued you," from a lover's lips! There is always a nameless something in a convent which, even in the minds of those who have entered it most willingly, enhances the idea of freedom. The young sisters could think of nothing short of an elopement.

They kept saying to themselves that something or other would happen soon. A lover, they agreed, is not soon defeated. There are a thousand other disguises for the handsome dealer—a thousand other available schemes. A romance was about to be acted under their very eyes. True, they were not allowed to read novels, but here was one coming on, with their convent for its stage. How glorious! something new, at all events.

All that evening, all the next day, the young sisters were on the tiptoe of feverish expectation. Their eyes and thoughts were constantly turning to the door and that delicious parlor, the only cranny through which the world was allowed to peep in. When Sister Scolastica was sent for, their woman's instinct told them that the summons had some connection or other

with the all-absorbing topic. Well, they would soon know all about it—that was one comfort.

But to return to Julio. Minutes seemed years to him while he waited for a reply. However, his faithful envoy soon returned, and, producing a little note, said,

"Here is the answer, sir; and now for my second gold piece."

His hand shook as he drew out his purse and gave her the money. The letter was addressed to M. Julio de la Clavière.

"It's not in my sister's handwriting," he said, as he opened the envelope and read,

"M. Julio de la Clavière is requested to have the goodness to call at the convent. I have a communication to make to him in which he is personally interested.

"SISTER THERESA, Lady Superior."

"Thank God!" he exclaimed; "Louise is mine again."

Unable to control his delight, he cleared the distance between the osteria and the convent almost at one leap. The lay sister was waiting his arrival, and admitted him at once.

In the parlor he found the reverend mother and a pale, sickly young lady.

He bowed reverentially. The lady received him with a gracious smile.

"Do you recognize Mademoiselle Louise de la Clavière?" she asked.

"No, reverend mother; that young lady is not my sister."

"You see I had wronged you by an unjust suspicion, and was anxious to repair the injury in good faith. I saw at once that you were no traveling peddler, but I took you for an enterprising lover, with a ladder of ropes in his eye; and now I find you to be an honorable gentleman. So I was anxious to convince you that your sister was not here."

It would be idle to attempt to picture Julio's disappointment and vexation. However, he thanked the lady superior most cordially, and, as soon as he had returned to his hotel, packed up one of his most beautiful mother-of-pearl carvings, and directed it to her in these words: "From a wanderer in search of his sister, to the reverend mother Theresa."

CHAPTER XIV.

JULIO'S TRAVELS CONTINUED.

THE next day Julio set out for Aquapendente, a small town charmingly situated on the edge of the Lake of Bolsena. The road was very bad, but the scenery around was most lovely—mountains rising on every side, and cascades trickling down from their summits into the lake at their feet. Dejected as Julio was, he could not but enjoy the scenery, though it was neither so pleasing nor yet so fertile as the Pyrenees. Unfortunately, the Apennine chain is very bare. But few forests are to be found in it; still, the

distant landscapes are exceedingly beautiful, such as painters delight in, presenting many a perfect picture, exquisitely harmonious, graceful, and complete. In the Pyrenees a man is like a mouse, running in and out among the stupendous piles erecting their terrible heads above him. Here the elevations are less abrupt, and the outlines are softened down into smooth and rounded forms, while man, instead of being overwhelmed by the might of Nature, appears as her royal master.

There is no resemblance at all between the Pyrenean and Apennine lakes. The former are generally at a great height, girt round by snow-clad pine forests, inexhaustible reservoirs of those cool, clear floods which they are ever pouring down into the valley. The Apennine lakes, on the other hand, are generally found in low latitudes. Their stream is feeble; some of them, indeed, resemble little inland seas, as, for example, the Lake of Pérouse. Moreover, from the warmth of the temperature incidental to their position, there are numerous dwellings on their banks. Agriculture flourishes, the winters are very mild, and the summers cool; whereas the Pyrenean lake, with its wild and desolate surroundings, is a deserted spot. Scarcely a hut even is to be seen near its shores. A few tourists and herdsmen are its sole visitants, and that only for four months in the year. The rest of the time it is frozen over, and swathed in a shroud of snow, which frequently rends the congealed crust till the violent summer heats arrive, when the whole mass breaks up with a terrible crash, and hurls itself, in tremendous fragments, down the furious torrents, which are thus supplied with their volume.

All which observation Julio summed up by reflecting that the quiet, hospitable Apennines were better adapted for inhabiting, the wild, terrible Pyrenees for sketching; while the tremendous and the eternal are more strikingly manifested in the latter than the former, with their racing hurricanes and impetuous storms.

How willingly would he at that moment, had he recovered his sister, have pitched his tent with grateful joy in one of those unknown villages on the western bank of the Lake of Bolsena!

He had no difficulty in inquiring among the Christians and Capuchins of Aquapendente. There all was quiet as in the dimmest and remotest past. In that uninvaded corner of the world, where civilization was still in its antediluvian stage, no stir of circumstance occurred. Many a long day had passed since a stranger had set foot within those convent walls. "What could this traveler want there?" was the question that passed wonderingly from lip to lip. Julio was believed to be a poor half-witted wanderer, crossed in love. The people soon saw that his heart was not in his basket of wares. He was a bad hand at peddler's work.

As he left Aquapendente, a little note was placed in his hands containing the following words:

"You are persisting in a mistake. You are bent on going north when you ought to go south. You will be sure to find her at Rome."

The handwriting was unknown to him, but the sentiment was what the Abbé Denis had been good enough to impart to him more than once before.

So he had followed him to Aquapendente. Was this a mere chance, a mere accident of travel, or had the fellow a private object in urging him to follow the advice he was so everlastingly reiterating.

There was evidently some secret in the matter, though as yet Julio failed to suspect any thing.

At Torruccia the Dominicans received him very unfavorably. He met M. Denis in the public square, and received a cordial greeting from him with a loud shout as he turned his back,

"You are particularly fond of the North, sir."

At Orvieto the Benedictines refused even to see him. The lady superior of the Carmelites, however, was just a thought more civil; admitted him to her presence, bought a rosary, but declined conversation.

At Bagnoarea the Franciscan nuns were not over-gracious. They were much obliged to him all the same, but they had plenty of rosaries which they were in the habit of selling themselves. So it was a case of two of a trade. There, too, turned up friend Denis.

The idea was perpetually occurring to him as he left these various places, "Who knows but I am leaving my beloved Louise behind me, within these high walls which I have been unable to penetrate?"

At Montefiascone there was the same failure, the same difficulty about gaining admission, the same imperfect researches, and the same dependency at the result. As he turned a corner he almost rushed into the arms of his shadow.

"My good fellow, pray take care; you put one's bones in peril by that reckless style of walking. See, now, you would never believe that I was a friend of yours. Well, I say again, and mark my words if they don't come true, you will never find the object of your search in these mountain convents. Why won't you go to Rome?"

"Thank you," said Julio, dryly, as he moved off.

He had an instinctive aversion to this man and his officious suggestions, and whether from a simple determination to adhere to his original plan, or from confidence in the good judgment and sound advice of the French agent who had received him so warmly at Civita Vecchia, or from a wish to defy the impertinent fellow who had so offensively dogged his steps, he made not the slightest deviation from his old route. His next point was Viterba, along the old Via Cassia, replete with interesting relics of antiquity.

It was full of convents; a curious old place; one of those ancient Italian towns, thickly studied, in the time of the Middle Ages, with queer out-of-the-way buildings. Julio alighted at the Hotel Franceschini. He had observed the Abbé Denis several times in the streets, but had not spoken to him.

His success here was better than in the other towns, thanks to the assistance of a young priest, a prebend of the cathedral, who gave him the fullest possible details on the points about which he inquired. Satisfied that he might do so with safety, he told him his whole history, and the good canon, warmly sympathizing with him in his trouble, joined cordially in the search. However, it was soon ascertained that there had been no recent admission into any of the convents in Viterba.

"I quite agree with the advice of the French agent," said the canon on parting. "You won't find her in the large towns. I fancy they must have hidden her in some out-of-the-way corner."

And Julio left for Vetralla, a very small town to the south.

It was Tuesday, November 20th, 1860. The weather was still glorious, for in that beautiful country the autumn is of long duration. On reaching the only hotel of any size in the place, he set to work at once with his usual inquiries, skillfully proposed.

"There's a Clarissan and Dominican convent here, sir," said the landlord, "and two miles off a fine house of the Benedictines of Notre Dame de Forcassi; to-morrow is the feast of the patron saint. There will be grand music and a large attendance. All the gentry round will be present."

Julio had a long conversation with him about the religious houses at Vetralla, and gleaned the intelligence, by the way, that no new member had been admitted into any of them, to his knowledge, for a long time.

"Nor at Notre Dame de Forcassi?"

"Least likely of all. It's a most retired spot, out of the way of all communication, unless, indeed, you go by the road from Corneto to Viterba, which is in a wretched condition and very badly kept."

Julio determined to be present at the festival the next day, if it was only to witness the ceremony. As he had still a few hours of daylight after dinner, he betook himself to an old cemetery north of the town, which the landlord had mentioned as possessing great antiquarian interest.

From the time of his discomfiture at Montefiascone, he resolved to lay aside all disguise, and had accordingly packed up his peddler's dress in his traveling bag.

"Let me assume my own proper character," he said to himself; and accordingly, from that time, he was a French traveler visiting the country, and studying its various objects of interest.

He was not long in finding out that he was all the better received at the various hotels, and

that in this particular case the landlord was quite conversational and abundant in details. Politeness went so far, indeed, as to dub him "Excellence."

Dressed in a frock-coat of fine cloth, with a paletot over it, he threaded the streets of the little town, and reached the large old Etruscan burying-ground. The earth had been turned up in several places, a thing which frequently happens in Italy, by students, in search of those vases and other antiquities which decorate the museums of Europe, more especially those of Naples, Rome, and Florence.

The Etruscan tombs are very deep. You go down into them by a long staircase of hewn stone, open to the sky. A rude door opens into the vault, which is hewn out of the solid rock. Occasionally columns of an eccentric character, and belonging to no order of Grecian architecture whatever, support the ceiling, which slopes down on both sides, displaying at intervals wooden girders. The bodies are placed in sarcophagi, on the lid of which might often be seen a portrait of the deceased tenant, precisely like the mediæval tombs in our churches and cathedrals.

The scene was by no means new to Julio. However, as he crossed the cemetery, he was struck by the entrance of one of the vaults, which was unusually grotesque, and descended the steep, half-broken staircase to study it more minutely. Taking out a small album, he set to work to make a sketch of it.

He had scarcely begun to draw when he heard a voice overhead.

"So, Monsieur l'Abbé—I beg pardon, monsieur, only—you have given over selling."

Julio looked round and looked up. It was his dear old friend Denis.

"I have followed your example myself," he continued.

And truly the young gentleman was sprucely attired. He had brought round in front the hair which he used to arrange behind his ears, and, with a cane in his hand, looked the very picture of one of those men who, with little enough breeding about them, have a sort of literary and educational polish.

"I can not compliment you on your change of dress," said Julio; "it's not becoming."

"Sorry to hear it. I'm freer to do what I please in it, that's all; just your case, I fancy."

"Just so. But would you be good enough to tell me whether you are following me in this way in fulfillment of a vow to that effect?"

"Well, yes, if you like," said Denis, in a merry off-hand manner. "The fact is, I want to see how far obstinacy will carry a man. 'Pon my soul, you amuse me. Take my word for it, if I were out sister-hunting, it wouldn't be at the ends of the earth—at Vetralla, for instance, that I should expect to find her—just fancy, at Vetralla. There are cats there, and nothing else. I engage you mean to spend to-morrow at Forcassi. Go, by all means, my fine fellow, and much good may it do you. Why, you

must be mad. I'm sick to death of urging you to go to Rome. Yet, as it is the only advice I can give you, I must repeat it at any risk, and make my bow. I am obliged to take my quarters in the same hotel as yourself, for the very excellent reason that there's only one in the place, otherwise I would have spared you the annoyance of being under the same roof with myself. To-morrow we go to Forcassi. Ha! ha!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONVENT FESTIVAL.

THE Forcassi madonna is the most renowned in Italy. It is of black wood, or more probably of wood painted black, like the Virgin of Loretto, and, like it, is believed to be the handiwork of St. Luke, who, he it observed, never was a sculptor, while the Mosaic creed of his youth must have given him a horror of images. But trifles such as these are no obstacles to faith in a tradition in the Roman States. It has a good effect to say of a statue that it has been painted or carved by St. Luke, so why not say it?

More fortunate than the Virgin Mother herself, her wooden representative was famous for innumerable miracles. The shrine was loaded with dedicatory gifts. No temple of Esculapius had ever received such a costly and unlimited abundance of lamps, chandeliers, and jewels, studded with precious stones, as fell to the lot of the powerful Forcassi madonna, the universal healer. Chiefly conspicuous in her possessions is her extensive wardrobe of seven dresses, each richer than the other, and providing her with a fresh dress for every day of the week. In the eighteenth century, at the solemn festivals, more especially that of the 21st of November, which we are about to attend, she was got up gorgeously in the latest fashion, with a most touching perruque of powdered, frizzled flaxen hair, and duly perfumed and arrayed in complete French style. Crinolines being now the rage, even in the remotest hamlet of Italy, a day will come when the lady at Forcassi will decline appearing without one. So much of modern progress and reform will certainly be allowed. Indeed, it is already working its way rapidly. Since 1855, it was our good fortune to witness in a chapel in one of the southern towns, during the month of Mary, a madonna arrayed in steel surroundings, whose majestic amplitude went to our heart.

Be it put on record, to the honor of the Benedictine nuns, that in the year of grace 1860—of unhappy memory to the lovers of the temporal power—the Forcassi madonna, albeit superbly invested with ribbons, lace, and jewels, was defective in that one point. She was without Well, never mind. Julio got a near view of her on the shoulders of twelve peasants, who bore her along on a stately throne marvelously adorned. Young village girls, dressed in white, and crowned with flowers, with wax tapers

in their hands, surrounded her. Then followed the Benedictines, but no farther than the cloister. Arrived at the end of it, they passed into the choir, separated from the rest of the church by a carved wooden railing, and covered at the back with fine cloth, thin enough to admit of those in the nave seeing distinctly the movements of the nuns, without being able to distinguish their faces.

The church itself, a gorgeous building, was covered with paintings by Procaccini, and exhibited also a canvas of Leonardo da Vinci's, and a Holy Family supposed to be by Raphael. The painting over the high altar represented the Purification. The humorous artist had depicted the two turtle-doves in a basket covered with calico. A child in attendance on the high-priest, more disposed for fun than solemnities, is in the act of lifting a corner of the cloth, and inserting his fat finger, an intrusion which the doves resent by vigorous pecking.

Unfortunately, the sculptured portion of the church was hidden, according to custom, by flaring silk hangings. Festoons of boughs and blossoms were suspended along the cornices, and the pavement of the nave was strewn with flowers and sweet herbs.

The entire front of the building was covered with little glasses of various colors, intended for an illumination after dark.

The interior of the nave, from the railing to the first bar of the arch, was set apart for visitors of distinction. A large orchestra was occupied by one hundred and fifty musicians, all amateurs, but fully qualified to rival the most talented professionals. The religious music of Italy is undeniable; the church services are, in point of fact, as good as concerts.

The morning service on the present occasion was almost interminable. In addition to the incessant contributions from the organ-loft, there was a sermon to be undergone; being in Italian, however, it was a novelty to Julio. The preacher of the day had selected for his subject the necessity of giving the heart to the Virgin, and had divided his discourse into two parts. The longest was again subdivided into the advantages attendant on the observance of this duty, and the punishment consequent on its neglect. The second part was occupied with the story of a princess, passing fair, who had given herself body and soul to the Virgin. Both her brothers having died, she became her father's heir; and he, regardless of her aversion to all gentlemen in general, and this one in particular, promised her in marriage to a neighboring prince. Handsome though the scion of royalty was, she would not let him come near her. On the night before that appointed for her marriage, she went into the chapel of the Virgin, crying bitterly, and entreating her to help her out of her difficulty. Immediately a leprosy covered her from head to foot, and the once shining beauty became, in appearance at least, very disagreeable. With this touching climax, the orator brought his performance to a conclusion. All present

fell on their knees. It's the right sort of thing in Italy to cry during the sermon; so they wept, shouted, struck their breasts, and, though the connection was not very evident, pledged themselves generally never to do any thing wrong any more.

Down comes the preacher from his pulpit, and then farewell to bursting sobs and anguish of heart. The agitated weepers cast inquiring looks around, and exchange smiles. The performance of the day opens with music.

Such was the impressive scene which for three mortal hours the wretched Julio had to witness. By elbowing his way a little, he had contrived to reach the edge of the orchestra. From that place he had a better view of the proceedings of the Benedictines. So powerful is imagination, that many a time he fancied he saw behind the choir screen a female figure dressed quite differently from the others. That was all he could make out. What if it were Louise! Oh that he might lift one corner of that jealous curtain!

On these occasions the evening service is even more magnificent than the morning, so far as the music is concerned. The whole thing is a concert from beginning to end. They have no mass to celebrate, so they take their time.

About the middle of the service, after the organ had played a sort of introit, there came a solo. The singer was in the choir, where the Benedictines were gathered. It was a woman's voice, of wondrous fullness; and, notwithstanding that the cloth veil in front of the railing tended greatly to deaden its vibrations, it penetrated with its volume and sweetness to the very end of the nave.

Julio caught the Italian words of the fragment, pronounced with a marked French accent. He listened again—for a moment bewildered and stupefied.

"It is—it is Louise's voice!" he cried; "there's no mistaking it. It is she! yes, it is she!"

Could there be two voices exactly alike? And even if that were probable, the singer must be either Louise or one of her countrywomen—a French girl at Notre Dame de Forcassi, in the remotest part of the Roman States. There could be no possible doubt. She was there. Here, at length, was the poor, persecuted victim's prison. Julio had found his sister.

Wild at his discovery, he was no longer his own master. All arguing and reflecting at an end, he bounded from his seat like an arrow from a bow, just as a murmur of applause was echoing through the building, hurried through the nave, crossed the reserved place, flung open the railing without ceremony, and pushing on to the very foot of the altar, shouted out hoarsely in Italian,

"My sister! it's my sister! my sister who was stolen from me in France by a disgraceful trick. I claim my sister. Before God and man, I command you to restore her."

And, stepping forward, his eye darting fire, his hair flying wildly about, his arm stretched out like an iron bar, he seized violent hold of the curiously-wrought doors communicating with the Benedictine choir, and flung them open, shattering them to pieces. Spurning the fragments with his feet, he pressed on, while the people in the nave saw the young French girl spring forward, at the first sound of her brother's voice, into his extended arms.

Grasping her hand in the presence of the petrified nuns, he crossed the sanctuary, and politely requested the congregation to make room for them, as they wished to leave the church.

At this thrilling achievement, some of the spectators were horrified, others delighted. "She is his sister," they said; "he had a right to her. He has acted quite properly."

"He should have appealed to the protection of the law."

"Oh yes, much good that would have done him. His sister would have died of old age long before the law got her out."

Others, recovering their surprise, exclaimed, "Awful! awful! a deed of violence! an outrage to the Madonna! In a holy place, too!"

While a stronger voice than any that had been yet heard roared out,

"Stop that man! He is guilty of sacrilege. He has broken into the cloister of a nunnery."

Meanwhile all were looking at the young pair, who advanced toward the door, compelling general admiration, sympathy, and respect—the brother, for his vigorous energy; the sister, for her exquisite beauty and the dignity of her bearing.

The church was a church no longer. The confusion was tremendous. The orchestra broke up; the nuns left the choir, the celebrant the altar, declaring that after such a profanation the chapel was accursed. The Madonna (who, by the way, should have been on the look-out) was veiled, the candles blown out; and, by degrees, the excited crowd issued from the great door, through which Julio and Louise had already passed, threatened by some—females generally—but escorted and protected by the young men, who formed the bulk of the gathering.

Meanwhile a man had started hastily for Viterba on horseback—the same person, in point of fact, who had shouted out after Julio in the church. He was going to inform the magistrate of the sacrilege which had just been committed, and to procure assistance for the culprit's arrest. Charging him with the execution of that measure, he told him he was about to communicate the whole affair to the vice-consulate of Viterba, and to the delegate of the Holy Office, whose duty it is to take cognizance of offenses against religious orders.

The Italian police in small towns is no more expeditious than the French. While the poor podesta was hunting about for his staff, in all probability enjoying themselves at the fête, his

informant made all speed for Viterba, and soon returned with officers of the vice-consulate, and men under their orders, prepared also to carry out the instructions of the Holy Office.

Meanwhile let us return to Julio. On leaving the church, his first thought was to press to the frontier; but then there was a distance of at least twenty kilometres before him. He had recognized at once the threatening voice which greeted him as he quitted the building, and comprehended immediately the great peril of their position.

"It's all over with us!" he exclaimed. "The sbirri will be here directly. What am I to do? I must return to Viterba, and get a horse or carriage for Louise. A delicate girl like her could never go twenty kilometres on foot. She would be tired out even with going to Vetralla."

Time was indeed precious. They might be arrested at Viterba. The ominous cry heard in the church determined him as to his course. He must save Louise at any risk.

It was ridiculous to return to a petty place where the event was already famous, and whence the hunt would probably begin. After having gone about a hundred yards on the road to Vetralla, they took a narrow and retired path behind a little hill, hoping that the road would lead to some dwelling. It was four o'clock; the night would soon overtake them at that time of the year. In the distance was heard the sound of the carriages conveying visitors home from the fête at Forcassi to Vetralla and the country round.

As soon as they were alone, they gave themselves up to the unutterable delight of reunion. Such moments of meeting after terrible suffering have a sweetness in them which no words can picture. To have been hunted about as they had been hunted about, after their quiet presbytery life; to have been the chief sufferers in a terrible drama of spoliation, persecution, malice, and revenge, of which they could not foresee the end, and then to be together again, was bliss indeed. But as the stag, drawn from his lair by the sound of dog and horn, knows not what fate awaits him, so were these two all in the dark as to whether dark den or hospitable roof was to offer them its shelter.

Happily, there is always such a thing as a presentiment of coming evil. Failing experience of suffering, an inner voice warns us of its approach. But at what time—at what period of our life, what section of its pathway is to be rough and rude? These are questions to which we can return no answer; and in the solemn silence that greets them lies the great mystery of our life. We approach that terrible unknown place of danger, no science of ours availing to anticipate the nature of the sacrifice, or where it will take place; what hand will wield the knife, and where the knife will penetrate.

Louise and Julio had too much of the martyr spirit to be dismayed at the prospect assigned to them in the providence of God. They deemed it glorious to wear a crown of thorns;

not that God was to them a cruel God, who delighted in singling out his victims, watching their tortures, and reveling in their pain: a pagan idea as irrational as it is blasphemous—a theory of fetichism in its wildest development; but that, in the concurrence of circumstances, it happens, necessarily, that weak and strong alike suffer from the collision. The strong are generally those of little principle and much capability of defiance; the weak are recruited from the good, the gentle, the holy, and loving-hearted. And these are they of whom the saints are composed, and whose home at last is with God in heaven.

This consummation is never effected on earth, as some imagine, by a round of superstitious observances. It is not so that illustrious characters are wrought and beaten out, as the Indian fanatic, even, might tell the Carmelite, but by bending meekly beneath the solemn burden of life which God has placed upon our shoulders, and sublimely apprehending and acquitting its obligations entailed by that law of Heaven, whose provisions are left unfulfilled by those who withdraw from mankind. The recluse destroys—so far as he is concerned—the very existence of that social economy which God has instituted. He surrounds himself with an artificial society; and even if God, in his clemency, deign to suffer the absurdity, he does not enroll its supporters among his conspicuous servants. He who hung on the cross was not to be found in the cloister. The monkish life is not derived from our Christian faith; it existed before it, and has still its devotees where the Gospel has never reached. The crucified One quitted on Calvary a life of toil, of which the great thought and principle was ministry. His apostles were hard-working fishermen; Paul was a tent-maker; and, to come down to modern times, Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul, Charles Borromée, and Fénelon, whether they liked monks or not, never honored them with their society, nor passed one hour of their illustrious and invaluable lives in the seclusion of the cloister. The more the world progresses, the less use it will have for Essenes or Carmelites, and the greater for earnest, honest workmen, ready to work at human regeneration. That was a grand revolution which convulsed the world some eighteen hundred and sixty years ago; and that, too, was a mighty change that marked 1789 as a glorious epoch. The one was God's direct and evident handiwork; the other, under Him, the doing of a nation in arms, soon to be joined by other nations, in consolidating the achievements of the past, and in inaugurating the triumph of the future.

But Louise, all this time, is telling her brother how the Countess of—— had induced her to leave St. Aventin.

"My anxiety to save you," she said, "made me rash and credulous; and, but for your loving devotion, we should have been separated forever."

We will complete her account of what had

happened to her since their sudden parting by mentioning certain facts which could not possibly have come to her knowledge.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MORAL THEOLOGY OF THE JESUITS.

WHAT occurred after Louise left the presbytery may be told in a very few words.

The countess had made every preparation to facilitate the execution of her designs. She left Louise at a convent of Clarissans, six miles from T—.

"You will pass your month of retreat here," she said, "where you will see no one but the holy nuns, who don't even know your name. All they have been told is that you are a giddy girl, in danger of straying from the faith. You will be perfectly at liberty to walk in the garden, attend the services, or remain in your own apartments, absorbed in salutary meditation."

Alas! Louise's meditations were any thing but salutary. They were painful in the extreme. She began to fear that she had been the victim of a plot. She pictured to herself her brother's anguish on returning to the presbytery and finding her gone. She prayed, indeed—not, however, that God would incline her to be a nun, but that he would comfort her dear Julio, whom she had so thoughtlessly forsaken.

The interval assigned in her letter had already expired, and no step had been taken toward abandoning the appeal. Every obstacle in her path, however, served only to stimulate the eagerness with which the countess prosecuted her schemes. She wrote two more letters to Julio, imitating Louise's hand as nearly as possible. The reader will remember that she had in her possession a copy of the first letter in Louise's handwriting. Meanwhile Julio held out, and the trial-day was appointed. Exciting reports, however, of the disappearance of Louise began to circulate. Mention was made of a protest from Julio. The countess was dismayed at what she had done. Should Louise not wish to become a nun, she felt it would be safer to give her her liberty, and in that case she could, of course, exact from her a promise to reveal nothing of what had occurred to her; but would she keep it? Would she not tell her brother every thing? Madame began bitterly to repent of what she had done, foreseeing that the forged letters might very possibly compromise her. At length she repaired to Father Boniface, her Jesuit confessor, and narrated all that had happened. He at once saw the folly of her conduct, and, for the first time in twenty years, abused her right well, calling her, without reserve, imprudent, obstinate, and rash. Above all, he scolded her bitterly for having dared to make use of Father Briffard's name. The abashed lady bowed meekly to the storm of Jesuit wrath, promised to do any thing she was told in atonement for her fault, and declared

her willingness to make any pecuniary sacrifice, if that was required.

Father Boniface proceeded at once to the Provincial, and, with a crimson face, flashing eyes, and voice palpitating with rage, told him all that had occurred, not omitting to mention that the countess had offered to place her purse at their disposal.

"Money smoothes all difficulties," said the Provincial, quietly.

"And yet it couldn't stop the performance of the *Wandering Jew*—and God only knows the mischief that play did us! And here is this blessed countess making another Adrienne de Cardoville of that La Clavière fellow's sister. Oh! these women, these women! how wise those are who decline having any thing to do with confessing them. It's Father Candal who has ruined the countess. I have always dreaded her obstinate disposition; since her success with Madelette, she has thought herself equal to the government of the universe. I kept her down; Candal puffed her up; and here's the consequence—and a very pretty consequence it is!"

"Now don't be in a flurry, Boniface. All will come right. Summon the fathers to a council forthwith. Then go to the apartment of Father Ignacio, whom the general dispatches through France with authority to decide on questions which it would be rash to commit to writing. He is a clever man, and may be of great use to us in the emergency. When it comes to diplomacy, an Italian Jesuit is worth three French ones. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, yes," said Father Boniface, rather abruptly, and a little astonished, if the truth must be told, to find the Provincial joking at such a serious crisis.

The fathers met in council, and a few moments afterward Father Boniface entered with Father Ignacio, the Italian Jesuit.

He was a small, shriveled-up, angular sort of man. His eyes retreated under thick, black eyebrows; his nose was pointed; his thin lips, parted often by a delicate, sardonic smile, revealed teeth as sharp as a jackal's. His chin was prominent. The whole character of his appearance indicated astuteness, energy, and cunning.

Father Boniface was called upon by the Provincial to give an account of the matter which had called them together. He did so very graphically.

"It's a most serious business," was the comment on all sides.

"Serious; you may well say that," observed Father Briffard, on ascertaining that he was compromised.

"What has the reverend Father Ignacio got to say?" asked the Provincial.

"That it is a serious matter here in France. Your civil rights, so opposed to canonical rights, are a barrier to measures in themselves most simple and obvious. I often ask myself how it happens that our order is so fond of this wretched country."

"Simply because of its abundant resources," replied the Provincial. "The yoke of passive obedience is worn here, it is true, with an ill grace. France is fond of arguing, and requires a reason for every thing; but France is liberal also. Her faith is not equal to removing mountains, but it is strong enough to untie purse-strings. Look at the work of Denier de St. Pierre—more successful in France than any where else. So let us speak up for the dear old country—the hen that lays the golden eggs, not only in Jesuit nests, but in those of all the other religious orders."

"By all means," said the other. "I grant that, from that point of view, Gallicans have their merit. At the same time, it is no less true that we are very circumscribed here in the use of our privileges. Oh, if we were only in the Roman States, we should soon know how to dispose of M. Julio and his sister, so that there would be no farther trouble about them."

"We must pray to God," said a solemn-looking old father; "we must pray earnestly."

"Pray to God; quite so," retorted Father Ignacio. "Pray for the sudden death of this young lady and gentleman."

"Oh, shocking! shocking!"

"It's what one of our best theologians teaches, the illustrious Hurtado de Mendoza. 'It is lawful to pray to God,' he writes, 'to remove by sudden death those who are preparing to persecute us, if we can not avoid their machinations in any other way.' Now, all the fine schemes of your precious countess have not sufficed to prevent the publication of the pamphlet or the carrying on of the appeal. So the quiet demise of this young man before the trial comes on would be exceedingly convenient, more especially as we have his sister's written declaration that she abandons the case. So do you, my dear father, who speak of praying, make that the subject of your prayer. You admire our theologians, I fear, but recoil from practicing what they enjoin. One would fancy that it is forgotten that not a book is ever published by any of our society without having been subjected to a rigid scrutiny, and sanctioned by the general. And as he has been intrusted with full powers by the sovereign pontiff, it follows as a matter of course that he can not make a mistake, and that any doctrine endorsed by him is to be accepted by the Church."

"Exactly the countess's argument with this little Louise."

"It wasn't wanted," said Father Ignacio, dryly. "The laity, especially females, have no business to know these things. In your beautiful France, however, people insist upon reading and knowing every thing. Forbid them novels, and they read theological works, blockheads that they are! Now in Italy, no one reads any thing, which is much better. The women think of their lovers, or repeat their rosaries, and stick to that, and so they are thoroughly manageable. But to return to our theologians. Let me tell you that an Italian bravo just now would be of

great service to us in reference to your friend Julio."

"What do you mean?" cried Father Boniface. "You are joking, reverend father."

"I am not joking at all, nor was Father Sanchez joking either when he said that '*where honors and property are at stake, it was lawful to fight a duel or assassinate in secret.*' That's intended for laics, you will say, as we clergy are not allowed to fight duels. Be it so. Then this law is for us. Fathers Tannerus and Caramuel do not hesitate to say that '*ecclesiastics and members of religious orders may kill and slay in defense not merely of their own life, but also of their property and that of the community.*' Father Lamy allows a member of a religious order '*to slay whoever attempts to steal the honor of his society, provided there be no other means of deliverance from his attacks, as, for instance, when his slanders will most certainly be put forth unless he is at once got out of the way.*' Now M. l'Abbé Julio wants to steal our reputation by publishing his pamphlet against us, and our property by his lawsuit, against both which attacks we are justified in defending ourselves. I only say this in vindication of the soundness of the doctrines I have quoted, though I know that you can not carry out these principles in France. The same truth holds good with reference to the doctrine of regicide. Mariana is not the only one impressed with the belief that it is lawful to kill a tyrant. It is not he, but one of our own order, who maintained that Jacques Clément, in assassinating Henri III., had done a right good act, a noteworthy, memorable deed, calculated to teach princes that their evil conduct will not go forever unpunished. These reasonings, however, can not be put forth in France, at the present time, at least. This is not the land for them. And since there are no bravi in a country with a police like yours, an electric telegraph, railroads, and a host of other execrable inventions, why, all I can say is, we are shut up on every side."

"It strikes me," said Father Boniface, in a whisper, to the solemn-looking Jesuit, "that Father Ignacio abuses his privileges a little, and takes advantage of the respect we pay to his opinion. I can't see that he has cleared up the matter in the least; and as for Mariana and Sanchez, why, we have no more to do with them than we have with Aristotle's Politics."

"Oh, he's a learned scholar and a holy man," replied the other, with an owl-like look, at which Father Boniface shrugged his shoulders, and nothing more.

"Well, reverend father," said the Provincial to the Italian, "what do you advise?"

"To stay quiet, and tell the countess to let the young girl go. It's no good keeping her. If we were in Italy, with the Holy Inquisition, possibly your countess herself might have to appear before the tribunal. But France is a country I know nothing at all about."

"We must not turn our backs upon the countess," said Father Boniface. "If the Abbé

Julio's sister is set at liberty, she will go straight to her brother, and tell him every thing. He will never believe that our hands are clear of the business; and as for Father Briffard, he is most seriously compromised. M. Julio will concoct a second pamphlet—he is mad after writing—in which he will depict us in no very favorable colors. He may even take measures to punish the countess for the forged letters. The whole thing will be a terrible scandal, which will reflect seriously upon us. I should be loth, for my part, to put into practice the teachings of Sanchez, Lamy, Jean Gans, and others; but desperate cases require desperate remedies. The countess has an income of 100,000 livres, a third of which, at least, has been given, up to the present time, to help us in our various undertakings; if we get her out of her present scrape, in which, remember, her zeal for our interests has involved her, her gratitude will know no bounds. Let Mademoiselle de la Clavière disappear. Nothing is easier than for Father Ignacio to place her in some Italian convent where she will be effectually secreted. It might be possible to make a nun of her. Father Briffard says that she is called to the cloister."

"Yes; but for that wretched brother of hers, she would have been one of the sisters of the *Sacré-Cœur* by this time. As a child, she was an angel; and God certainly willed that she should be thoroughly His."

"Ah! very well," said Father Ignacio; "then we will give her up to Him."

"A good idea," said the Provincial. "The fact is, we must not desert our friends. This young lady once out of the way, the countess is saved. She will never be suspected; doubtless we shall; but, without a particle of proof against us, the report will soon die out. Meanwhile we can easily spread about the report that, through fear of being lost forever by intercourse with a heretical brother, she withdrew from his influence. This view will be speedily adopted, and we shall scarcely be very culpable in disseminating it."

"Certainly not," said Father Ignacio, "because you will do so in the maintenance of your honor, and not from any vindictive feelings. I see you have not forgotten that our fathers in the theses of Louvain, 1645, maintained that it was only a venial sin to calumniate and asperse with false charges those who might speak against the order, in order to destroy their credit. 'Quid non nisi veniale sit, detrahentes auctoritatem magnam, tibi noxiam falso crimine elidere; while Jean Gans, Daniel Bastel, Pénalossa, Pillicirolli, and others, hold this opinion to be probably correct, which is enough, according to our doctrine of probability, to justify its conscientious adoption.'"

"Yes—we understand all that; we must rescue an interesting lady who has incurred danger in our behalf. Moreover, we must protect our own reputation, which would be seriously impaired if her indiscretions were ever published abroad."

"Of course she will pay for Miss Louise's trip and residence abroad," said Father Briffard.

"I should rather think so," replied the Provincial; "and you may also tell her that we look to her to decorate our chapel of the Immaculate Conception. She has splendid diamonds, and precious stones of every kind. I think that the sacrifice of these worldly vanities to the holy Virgin would be a suitable expiation of the serious error she has committed."

"Keep your mind easy, father; the countess is ours from this day forward, fortune and everything else."

"Very good," said Father Ignacio. "A sister of mine is superior of a convent of Benedictines of our Lady of Forcassi. Let this stupid countess either take the girl herself, or send her with a suitable person. I will tell my sister the facts of the case, and she will undertake the charge of her. 'Eventually, you may rest assured, she will take the veil.'"

Such was the method by which the Jesuits got rid of Louise in their anxiety to screen the countess.

She had seen Louise again, and had left no stone unturned to worm herself into her confidence. She showed her several of her mother's letters, with whom she really had been intimate—about the only true thing she told the young girl. In one of them, written about six months before Madame de la Clavière's death, the countess pointed out a passage to the following effect: "My daughter has the simple piety of a child of seven years old. She is an angel. She declares that as her brother Julio wishes to be a priest, she will be a nun. God grant that so it may be; then I should go down to the grave in peace. Alas! how eagerly have I sought the blessing from Him; but do I deserve to be heard?"

Necessarily this passage strengthened the influence of the countess over Louise, and tended to incline the latter to a convent life.

Meanwhile the countess, having received her instructions from Father Boniface, arranged her plans without delay. She was fond of traveling, especially of pilgrim expeditions. She had been to Trèves to worship the holy coat—a relic which, be it observed, is to be found also in France, at Argenteuil, and in several other towns. Should the reader stare at this assertion, be it known that the relic in question, like the heads of John the Baptist and St. Anne, has the faculty of being in several places at the same time.

A week after Louise left St. Aventin, the countess came to tell her that Julio had recalled his book and abandoned the appeal.

"So he is saved; and you will see him again as soon as you have fulfilled Father Briffard's second condition—a month's retirement in a convent. At the same time, dear Louise, I must tell you that I have long meditated myself a pilgrimage to Santa Casa, and a similar seclusion in the Ursuline convent of Loretto. Now, if Father Briffard has no objection, I

should like to take you with me. So write to your brother; you ought not to keep him in suspense. Tell him all that has occurred, and that we have rescued him from imminent danger in spite of himself. As soon as he knows that you are under my care, he will be quite at his ease."

Louise hesitated; but the countess's warm professions of attachment, her mother's letters, and the approaching marriage of Verdalon—a blow from which she had by no means recovered—all combined to revive her old leaning to conventual life. Perhaps, moreover, a desire to see famous Italy decided her to accompany the countess. Since she had pledged herself to a month's retirement, she might as well go to the Ursulines of Loretto, the journey to which place, according to the countess, would not take more than three weeks. Rejoiced at the thought of having in some way been the means of rescuing her brother, she was disposed to frank, open-hearted trust. Agreeing to the countess's proposal, she wrote a long letter to Julio, which her trustworthy friend had no difficulty in intercepting, and set sail with her that same evening. They had a very short journey, and the countess enjoyed the gratification of seeing the gates of Our Lady of Forcassi close behind Louise. She then left for Loretto, and piously went the round of the Santa Casa on her knees.

As for Julio, woe betide him if he presumed to search for his sister in the Roman States! Father Ignacio promised to look after him strictly. The end justified the means.

Julio was deeply affected by Louise's account of all that she had gone through—of her despair on finding herself a prisoner at Forcassi—of the persistent efforts that had been made to induce her to take the veil—of her unutterable delight on seeing him come toward her that day, like an angel of deliverance.

On the other hand, he told Louise all that he had suffered since she left St. Aventin—the measures he had taken to recover her—the verdict on the appeal—his resolve to go and hunt her out himself—his discouraging reception in most of the Italian convents, up to the happy day in which he had shattered the railing, and stretched out to her a liberating right hand.

During this conversation Julio was not so preoccupied with his sensations of happiness as not to reflect upon the perils of his position.

Fortunately enough, he had plenty of money in his possession; and as there is much risk in a flight like theirs, he thought, on the whole, that it would be safer if Louise were to secrete some of the gold about her person.

A little more than two kilometres along the road from Vetralla to Forcassi, the unfrequented path which they had been taking led up to a tiny little country house, in appearance exquisitely neat. Round the white walls was every sign of care and cultivation. Two clay vases of flowers decorated the door on either side; the sweetly-scented blossoms were regarded by Julio as favorable omens.

Two apartments, partitioned off from one another by a thin wall of pine wood, constituted the entire dwelling. The door was half open, and revealed a strong, healthy-looking man and his wife—a fine specimen of a Roman woman, with two children, the youngest of whom appeared to be about ten or twelve years of age, the occupants of one of the rooms. They were engaged in the labors of that particular time of the year, which consisted in olive-gathering.

Julio and Louise knocked at the door. Bowing as the master of the house appeared, he was requested to bring his sister in.

Julio asked the man if he could hire him two horses, and act as their escort to the Tuscan frontier.

The stranger recognized at once Julio's French accent, and, concluding that there was some love-story at the bottom of it—an elopement and a large reward—soon consented.

"With all my heart, signor," he replied, in bad French. "I will be your guide, and a good one too. But I have only one horse; so you must wait while I set off to Vetralla in quest of another."

"But we are in a dreadful hurry to get on."

"Pray do me the honor, for all that, of taking a chair. In the first place, no one ever visits Jacomo without sharing his hospitality. Jacomo is by no means rich, but he is no screw, all the same; and he always has a bottle of old Montepulciano for his guests. Come, friends, you are pale, tired, and famished. You must have some refreshment to get up your strength. We can talk business while you are eating."

To tell the truth, they were both of them very hungry, though they had never thought of that. So a large sausage, a few olives, and some cheese, was no uninviting meal.

"Since you are in a hurry," said Jacomo, "we must lose no time. But first tell me your story. You see I speak French. I learned it slightly—guess where! In France? Not a bit of it. In Rome, in 1849, when I was fighting against the French; and in 1859, when I was fighting with them. I am one of Garibaldi's soldiers, and a sworn foe of the temporal power. But don't let that alarm you, my sweet young lady. I'm nothing worse. Though I'm not fond of priests, I saved their lives often in the revolution at Rome. In saying that I dislike them, let me explain myself. Their business is to be our spiritual teachers. We are not dogs; we believe in God; but they think they can govern the world. Not content with being lords ecclesiastical, they would fain be lords political. But not a bit of it; their day is at hand; we Romans are only champing the bit; wait a while."

Jacomo was on the verge of a long political disquisition to flavor the Montepulciano, when the silence of his auditor (for Julio was gloomy and preoccupied) convinced him that the subject he had chosen, interesting as it was, had better be dismissed.

"You have not told me your history," he re-

marked. "Gain the frontier, humph! and at once too—at once. Come, explain the whole thing. You are eloping with this pretty young lady—confess."

"She is my sister."

"Oh, exactly; very good that—of course; all the same, you may as well tell me the truth."

And Julio, in a few brief words, narrated what had occurred at the convent.

"Good heavens, my boy! why, had you been chief of a bandit troop, and robbed his Holiness from Porto d'Anzio or Castel Gandolfo, or even been answerable for eight or ten murders, I might possibly respect you less, but I should scarcely pity you as I do now—actually breaking into the nuns' inclosure; and, above all, at the convent of Our Lady at Forcassi. But that's just like you stupid French. You don't understand our fashions. You play with a knife—never mind over whom. Off you go with young girls, under the very nose of papa and mamma. Now, in our country, when a man has accomplished this sort of thing, he gets out of the way. The police are not hard upon brigands; but the Madonna! the cloister! my good fellow, you have no idea of what you have done. Why, do you know that at this moment all the sbirri in Vetralla are on your track? The chief commissioner of the Holy Inquisition is a terrible man; his very name frightens the entire country. There will be a general hunt after you. In an hour they will be at my door, bombarding my poor dwelling. However, they won't take us easily, I can assure them. I should rather like to worry them."

Jacomo was hard to convince. He was honestly convinced, in spite of all denial, that Julio was carrying off a novice from the convent of Forcassi. Julio, having tried in vain to induce him to believe the true facts of the case, and reflecting that it didn't really matter whether he accepted them or not, left him eventually to his own impressions.

The meal over, the host turned to the two travelers, remarking,

"You love one another, my young friends. You are very wise. If I am at all redeemed from the excesses into which some have fallen, I owe my exemption to the twofold love of my

mother and my wife. The one has gone to her rest these ten years. The other you see before you. As soon as I saw that all was over, that you wretched Republican Frenchmen had strangled our young republic in its birth, I retired to my cottage, free from all suspicion, and reached by no persecution. Since then I have escaped all pursuit. I have been left alone to enjoy a quiet life till the day came for me to return to Garibaldi's ranks. That time you were on our side; only you stopped too soon, for Italy is not made free from the Alps to the Adriatic. But all is not over yet, and if ever Garibaldi wants Jacomo, Jacomo is ready, and neither children nor wife shall hold him back."

As he spoke he got ready to go out.

"Since you are in a hurry, it's an understood thing that I am not to get you a horse. You must walk with me. Young gentlemen who run off with young ladies must be ready to rough it. My mare is a strong, quiet beast, and knows the road by heart. You may safely trust her, miss. The saddle is soft and comfortable; you can lean on the pommel; you will find it raised. Should there be any danger, loosen the bridle, dig your heel into her sides, and you need not be afraid of any thing. She'd rescue you from the very claws of the devil. Come, we'd better start at once. By-by, wife; by-by, little ones. You won't see me till about noon to-morrow. Now, then, off-you go. Hurrah for liberty!"

Taking two pistols, he whispered to Julio,

"Do you happen to have any weapons about you?"

"Weapons—oh yes!" and he showed him a pocket revolver.

Just as they were starting, he added,

"There are several roads to the frontier. They will naturally expect to find you on the shortest and easiest, namely, from Petigliano through Valentano. So we'll take the one by Volscarceta, which is the roughest and wildest. They'll never expect to find us in these mountain gorges, where the smugglers have it all their own way; and as for the smugglers"—he was on the point of saying, "I am one myself," but, pulling up short, contented himself with the brief remark, "They know Jacomo."

P A R T V I.

A VICTIM OF THE INQUISITION AT ROME.

CHAPTER I.

THE FRONTIER.

THE road from Volscarceta to Valentano is tolerably good; and as Julio was an adept at mountain traveling, the little party pushed forward with considerable speed.

"You would have made a first-rate smuggler," said Jacomo, compassionately, "if you'd been brought up to the business." Jacomo, be it understood, thought that the pleasantest use to make of life was to risk it about a dozen times a day.

"Jacomo," whispered Julio, "listen. This is what I mean to do. If we are attacked, save my sister at any sacrifice; I'll take care of myself. Once at Volscarceta, she can wait for me there. I'm sure you'll protect her. I can rely upon your fidelity."

On reaching Toscanella the smuggler turned into a little side-path to avoid the possibility of meeting the *sbirri* in crossing the town, regaining the direct road about two kilometres on, the way growing rougher and rougher at every step.

Skirting the sides of Mount Calvello for some distance they reached the deserted site of an old Etruscan town, known in the country by the name of Castro, after passing which they would be beyond the frontier. Hardly had they arrived there, however, before four men in masks suddenly sprang out upon them from a dense thicket at the entrance to the ruins, and in the bottom of the ravine. The smuggler recognized them at once as bandits of the worst kind, who had for some months been ravaging the country from Corneto to Viterba, no steps having been taken to hunt them down. Seeing the imminent danger, he said to Julio,

"We are lost if we at all give way. Let us keep side by side, and push forward. The young lady had better stay behind."

The bandits drew up in battle-array, and presented their carbines. Shots were exchanged on both sides, and one of the bandits fell dead. Jacomo seeing that Julio had been wounded went up to him. "Never mind me," he said, faintly, "take my revolver and defend my sister."

Jacomo sustained a vigorous fire with the formidable weapon; and the three bandits, unprepared for so determined a resistance, took to their heels. At the first report of the fire-arms Louise's horse had taken fright and galloped off in the direction of Viterba.

"Jacomo, save my sister," were Julio's last words, as he sank back exhausted from pain and

weakness. A ball had struck him on his left arm. At that moment a moonbeam struggling out of a dark cloud lit up the scene. Julio had fallen at the foot of the hill; his face grew deadly pale, and his wound—as Jacomo discovered on searching for it—was welling with blood. The brave smuggler tore up a piece of the sufferer's shirt and bandaged his arm. Then he brought him a draught of water in his hat from a brook hard by, and sprinkled a little in his face, without, however, succeeding in restoring him to his senses. Again he examined the wound very carefully, washed it out, stanching the blood, and readjusted the wrappings with the utmost skill and tenderness.

He himself had been struck in the engagement—on the forehead and on the left leg—but he scarcely seemed to feel his wounds, slight as they were, and was only made sensible of their existence by a little pain which they entailed. He had too often had similar adventures in the mountains to trouble himself about such trifles.

Yet the position was decidedly critical. There was no house near. In the mean time what was to be done in that wide desert of Castro?

It would soon be morning, he reflected; he would wait for daylight, and watch by the side of the young Frenchman, who scarcely seemed to breathe, so great had been his loss of blood. Possibly some chance traveler or smuggler friend of his own might pass that way.

At a little distance the bandit, who had been mortally wounded, was writhing in horrible convulsions.

Jacomo had scarcely waited on poor Julio for half an hour—trying, by rubbing his hands and chafing his temples and chest, to impart some warmth to his benumbed limbs, and, if possible, recall life—when the sound of horsemen was heard in the distance, along the road by which they had just come.

He conjectured that it was the bandits returning, reinforced in numbers. Climbing up a little hillock, and squatting down in a thick, stunted juniper-tree, which completely covered it with a dark hood of foliage, he was effectually concealed, as no one would have suspected for a moment that that dwarf shrub could have contained a man.

Yet he could see and hear every thing that was going on. It was neither night nor day. The earliest streaks of the dawn were blending into the latest beams of the moon, and the result was that undefined tint which no pallet could ever render.

All this time the horsemen were rapidly ap-

proaching, and soon reached the scene of the encounter.

"Here comes the sbirri," said Jacomo to himself, "and in good force too. I can do nothing for this unfortunate young man; but, at all events, I'll go in search of the young lady who has been ridden off with."

"Signor, here's a dead body," said one of the new-comers, in the dress of a rifleman.

"So there is," replied the man who appeared to be at the head of the band, though he was in private clothes.

"Signor, here's another," said a second rifleman.

"They have been fighting here," said the chief. "This is some of Pietro Frappa's doing. His excellency the most reverend monseigneur at the head of the executive department had better look after these thieving, murderous fellows."

"Signor, it's Pietro Frappa himself. I know his face well."

"More the pity. His should have been a more glorious defeat than by the hand of some sturdy traveler or tourist, who had no notion.... Let's have a look at the other."

And he approached Julio. A vivid streak of day was in the horizon. The face of the wounded, turned toward the east, reflected the light.

"Why, here's the very man we're after! This is our French friend himself; but what's become of his sister?"

And he sent off two spies to continue the search along the road to Volscarceta.

The rest dismounted; the chief approached Julio, felt his pulse, and noticed the bandages.

"Those bandits are good enough fellows after all," he said. "They've been dressing his wounds. But look at poor Pietro Frappa. Is he quite dead?"

"As dead as a door-nail, signor, and without having shrived himself. God have mercy on his soul! He was a brave chap." While this somewhat original funeral oration was going on the chief produced a flask of brandy, which he carried about with him, poured a few drops down Julio's throat, bathed his temples, and made him inhale it. The cordial soon revived him; for his wound had been skillfully doctor-ed. He came round much as a man might awake from a dream.

"Louise—Jacomo—where am I? Who are you?"

"Your friends, M. Julio, who pity you very much. Those from whom we come desire only your soul's salvation. Better have dealings with them than with Pietro Frappa and his men. Just see the fearful condition to which they have reduced you! Come, try and get up. Ah, that's right. You are young enough yet, M. l'Abbé. There is plenty of vigor left in that muscular frame: and a wound in the arm is no very serious matter. Here is a perfectly quiet, tractable horse for you—try and mount."

"But my sister—my sister!"

"Two men are gone to look after her. They

will be sure to bring her back with them. Don't fuss yourself about any thing or any body. You may rely upon it, she will be treated with all proper respect. Here, you others—help M. l'Abbé to mount, and keep at his side in case he should faint. We'll go to Viterba—slowly at first."

Then turning to Julio, with an authoritative air, he added,

"Yours will be a lifelong repentance for what you have done—violating a holy cloister, profaning a sanctuary of the Madonna. What shocking forgetfulness of your priestly character! Acts like yours are thought a great deal of in Italy—a country where sacrilege is visited with a heavy punishment. It's different in France."

Julio caught nothing but the faint echo of this solemn reproof. He was just conscious enough to perceive that he was on horseback, that he was not with the smuggler, and that his dear Louise was no longer with him on Jacomo's trusty steed; he knew nothing more. The severity of his suffering made him shout out every now and then. Nature has mercifully provided that when the system receives any violent shock insensibility frequently ensues, bringing with it a total oblivion of pain. The wound must needs be bound up; but consciousness does not return till the great pain is past.

Julio arrived at Viterba, and was instantly attended to, by order of the representatives of the Holy Office. The physician pronounced it as his opinion that his wound was by no means dangerous, and that in a few days he would be quite equal to the journey to Rome.

CHAPTER II.

THE VISIONARY OF VITERBA.

On the same day that the commissioner of the Holy Office arrested Julio he effected, in accordance with strict orders from Rome, another capture of considerable importance. Viterba, like many other Italian towns, had its dreamer of dreams, its heroine of inspired illuminations. This lady, by name Laura Doni, was no common person. Her visions belonged by no means to the category of those experienced by a numerous order of damsels of her class, ever ready to place themselves at the service of the uppermost religious feeling, and seeking from the authorities in Church and State a formal sanction of their mission. It generally happens that almost all the various religious orders get hold of some one or another of this class, serving their end in the expectation of being, in due course, served by them. Not long ago the Jesuits had lighted upon a specimen, who "revealed" all kinds of eulogistic wonders about them, and submitted every one she could get hold of to their guidance and influence.

Laura Doni, who indulged in these visions and disclosures, and had many a familiar chat with her guardian-angel, was by no means easy

to manage. Her singular vaticinations were so far famous that they eventually reached Paris, where, among a certain section of highly pious and extremely erratic individuals, they obtained a certain amount of credence.

It may be interesting to detail a few of them as they were delivered in public at Viterba, in the presence of the numerous throng attracted by her shouts, under the influence of sleep-walking:

"The reign of Mary was about to commence. Not in vain had Pius IX. declared her immaculate conception. It was a true doctrine, and its proclamation would be the saving of the Church." But strange inconsistency, and very intelligible explanation of the thunders now hurled against her by the Holy Office, Laura had gone on to predict that only by the overthrow of the temporal power could the Church be restored to her ancient splendor. She indulged in expositions of the Magnificat that were eloquent and even sublime.

The words "He hath put down the mighty from their seat" were, according to her teaching, a prophecy of that special overthrow on which she insisted. Pius IX., she held, was to be the last king, and the first humble Pontiff whose head was to be encircled with the lowly crown of the Crucified. Thus she interpreted the words "He hath exalted the humble and meek."

Here was a curious medley of mysticism and politics. Laura was approached in a thousand different ways, in the hope of being made accessible to wholesome influence. Unbounded promises were made to her, conditional on her standing up for the sceptre as necessary for the support of the keys. All these, however, she rejected; sent Antonelli's agents about their business, though they had been at the trouble of coming to Viterba on purpose to look her up; and almost went so far as to kick the delegate of the Holy Office out of her room, in return for the numerous visits he had paid her by way of flattering her vanity, and thus gaining her over to his suggestions.

Assuming all her Roman dignity, she avowed that she dared not lie to the Holy Spirit or barter her conscience; and from that day set to work more vigorously than ever to spread abroad a belief in the speedy fulfillment of the obnoxious prophecy. Her influence was now becoming dangerous. Italian Liberals availed themselves of her predictions to kindle up popular enthusiasm, and sustain the impression that the day was close at hand which would see Rome the capital of the new Italian kingdom. The delegate forwarded to head-quarters a terrible report on her case. As she happened to be rich, and a member of a powerful family, the best course appeared to be to bring these utterances of hers, in some way or other, within the cognizance of the Inquisition, and thus withdraw her from the civil power to that impartial tribunal which has a habit of incarcerating awkward people, and judging them afterward.

So poor Julio and the formidable prophethess were bundled off to Rome in the same shabby conveyance. Four sbirri of the Holy Office, two in front and two behind, guarded the vehicle. As for Julio, he was supremely indifferent; but the lady was beside herself with rage.

"The wretches! the villains!" she cried, "their downfall is at hand. Beloved Mother, thy reign will soon commence on the earth, and then farewell to Cæsar's purple in the Church of God!"

And standing up in the car, looking haughtier than ever, flinging aside with one hand the veil which covered her face, and stretching out the other toward Rome she resembled, with her thin pale figure, one of those medieval statues of emaciated saints whose form could scarcely be detected beneath the folds of drapery.

"No more imperial power," she cried; "no more of pagan Cæsar as Christ's high-priest! Mary, immaculate Mary, thou hast at last placed thy foot on the serpent's head, and the nations prostrate before thee will soon sound thy triumph. And as for you, my fellow-countrywomen—my sisters—the era of liberty is at hand. You will be agents in the accomplishment of glorious issues. You will reign with Mary, and by her. Hitherto the Church has represented only the brute force of man; it is now about to put forth as its power the tender love of woman, in the person of the Immaculate Virgin. Pontiff of Rome, cease your efforts to scrape together the fragments of your triple crown shattered by the iron hand of revolution. Your real reign is coming—your absolute kingship over human souls. Your infallibility will be, as it ever has been, the dogma passionately clung to by a Christian people; but, first, 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat,' must receive its accomplishment. No more supreme rulers in the Church of Christ; no more humiliating degradation of the sex, restored to their rightful rank by Mary the Immaculate. Woman should be a priest as well as man; for she is purer than he, and better understands the influence and the reign of love. And it is because you—Pius IX.—have promulgated that immortal truth which underlies this glorious reformation, that you will be permitted to vacate your temporal throne, erected by the hand of man—you, the mighty, will be put down from an unworthy seat, in order that you may rise grandly from the moment's humiliation—the head of a spiritual Church—realizing, in your own person, the glorious assurance, 'He hath exalted the humble and meek.'"

One of the gravest errors—it might almost be said the greatest disgrace—of the Catholic priesthood of the nineteenth century, has been its unscrupulous patronage, from a motive apparently laudable, of the alarming development of mysticism in the bosom of the religious world. In great social crises the pretended spirit of prophecy—by no means foreign to human nature—exhibits itself in increased proportions; social economists and philosophers entertain pre-

sentiments on the subject of social emancipation. In the religious world this tendency assumes preternatural powers. Now it is God who appears; now the Virgin; or, again, guardian-angels—and all is in perfect sincerity and good faith. The incredulous are wrong in supposing that these deluded visionaries are a tribe of impostors. In almost every case they are weak-minded women, buried in a cloister, or, if not, leading a simple and austere life.

There is no question as to their number. The most popular among them are the children of La Salette and the young girl of Lourdes. Very few nuns have been without their visions; that is to say, those who pass their time in what is called “contemplation.” Sisters of Charity are too busy and too practically engaged to find leisure for that sort of thing. And all this spreads abroad, and becomes a common subject of discussion. The contagion seizes on unduly excited and imaginative subjects, and they keep up the ball. One after another comes forward with contributions to the stock; and so the evil expands to an alarming extent.

The general refrain of all these predictions circulated for nearly the last hundred years—so far back does the mischief date—is, that Paris will be burned: a prediction peculiarly palatable to those who have been entirely led away by mystical extravagances, and consequently receiving their most implicit belief. True, these doctors differ. Some have questioned the return of Louis XVIII., announced by Martin de Gallardon; while others, with a boldness worthy of the most advanced skeptic, are of opinion that, in spite of all that has been said by the heroines of La Salette, Pius IX. will, after all, escape crucifixion at the hands of the Italian party; but all agree in shouting, “PARIS WILL BE BURNED.” Paris, the most illustrious of cities, is doomed, by these gloomy enthusiasts, to the fate of accursed Babylon. They see only the stain on the hem of her garment. The halo of glory that surrounds her brow escapes their notice.

Yet the great home of mind and intellect is not thus to perish! Happily, even for you, birds of ill omen! for were your prophecy to be accomplished she would bury in her ruins—along with the infidelity which you cast in her face, but which (though this you forget) you have provoked by your absurdities—that eager apostolate in the cause of liberty which disarms you, as well as that active spirit which originates all those glorious and holy achievements, accepted, indeed, by Rome, but not of her devising. Paris is more thoroughly Rome than Rome herself. It is in her bosom that that life and vigor are circulating which will yet cause the Church to blossom as the rose. Away with you, idle and mistaken dreamers! Cease to visit her with your hatred, and to direct against her your sinister utterances. You are outraging Catholicism itself. Think you that if Paris were burned you would find it still surviving in her ashes?

CHAPTER III.

THE ENTRY INTO ROME.

It was the 22d of November, 1860. That evening the Corso was thronged with people; groups had collected in the Place del Popolo, and in many another quarter, at the Campo Vaccino, and on the bridge of the Castle of St. Angelo. The Roman aristocracy, according to custom, was out driving on Monte Pincio. Artists, idlers, ladies fond of displaying themselves, crowded the graceful slopes leading to that charming eminence, which commands a full view of the Eternal City. French officers, belonging to the army of occupation, mixed in the crowd; there, too, might have been seen peaceful citizens, never alone, but in knots of two or three. The Romans, by way of testifying their gratitude for the protection accorded by France to the Pontifical Government, under which it was their privilege to live, had the habit of fighting with every French soldier they might chance to catch by himself in out-of-the-way parts. Since then a strict order has been issued forbidding the military to go out alone.

On the day in question there was a strange excitement in the town. Not a disturbance, nor any thing approaching to it, only the Italian Committee had just posted up one of their proclamations. Some copies had been boldly stuck on the walls in broad daylight; and fragments were yet to be seen, left by the police, on the balustrades of the long staircase leading to “Alla Trinità del Monte,” on the columns of the churches, and on the public monuments.

There was a great talk about this proclamation, the effect of which had been electrical, and which, while it recommended the greatest possible caution, called upon the Romans to be ready for a decisive blow. Yet none of the hopes which it raised have hitherto been realized. The patience of the people is nevertheless as abiding as ever; and even though the hour of their deliverance is yet in the future, theirs is the glory of having avoided needless disturbances, and reserved for better days their patriotic hopes.

In the midst of the eager demand, during the last few years, of Rome for the capital of Italy, and the eager longing with which the boon has been sought from the reluctant hands of diplomacy, the enslaved populace have reined in their excitement with a discipline beyond all praise. The voice of the national party, in its every utterance, has been that of the great country herself; yet not a single struggle has warranted the intervention of armed force.

The carriage containing the two prisoners entered Rome by the Porta del Popolo, and followed the road leading to the Holy Office. As the various inquisitive groups of by-standers watched the carefully guarded vehicle, a stir of curiosity, not altogether free from uneasiness, was visible among them.

“Political scape-goats most probably,” said some.

Others, observing the presence of the sbirri,

concluded that the trusty police had captured a couple of rogues of the very worst class.

As the procession moved on one of the people, who knew the driver, came up.

"Who are these?" he asked.

"Prisoners of the Holy Office."

"Holy Virgin!" replied the Roman, with a compassionate look at the pale, tranquil face of Julio.

The words "Holy Office" passed from mouth to mouth of the gathering crowd, and created a general feeling of commiseration.

The groups of eager questioners became more and more numerous as the prison was neared. The street in which it stood was fairly crowded when the sbirri helped Julio and the prophetess to alight. The stern, commanding figure of Laura Doni had in it something terribly majestic. She looked like the angel of vengeance, brought thither to punish all the guilt and wrong-doing of Papal royalty through so many centuries, and holding in her hands the vials of the wrath of God. Her lips seemed almost parted to the denunciation against the ill-starred Pius IX., the representative of royal Pontiffs. "The day of your judgment is at hand; the hour when this awful score shall be settled to the uttermost farthing. Mene! Tekel! Peres!"

There was that about her that convinced the people that she was no culprit, but rather a deliverer. With a step of stately majesty she crossed the threshold of the building; while Julio, on the other hand, appeared like an angel of peace, come to proclaim the approaching advent of a day of restoration, himself its herald.

The ponderous gates swung to behind them, and the crowd dispersed sorrowfully.

"No getting out of there," said one; while a few of the more educated repeated to themselves the well-known words of Dante,

"Voi ch'intrate, lasciate ogni speranza!"

Then rose up, loud and clear, a deep cry from the last receding group:

"The hour of your rescue is at hand!"

The governor of the prison, a sinister-looking man, inscribed the name, title, and description of Julio on his register. By his side was a young laic, whose sharp, cat-like face was not the best qualified to inspire confidence. All necessary formalities having been gone through, just as the jailer was about to conduct Julio to the gloomy dungeon that awaited him the young man came up, and said, in a bantering tone:

"Had a pleasant journey, M. l'Abbé?"

Julio looked at him. It was the spy who, under the name of the Abbé Denis, had followed the unfortunate priest from town to town.

"May God forgive you!" was his calm reply.

"Go along with you. I am quite content. I wanted to get you over here at once; it would have saved me a horrid bore of a journey, tramping after you from place to place, especially that night when I found you on the frontier covered with blood from the bullets of Pietro Frappa. However, I hope I shall be well paid for all my trouble and fatigues. Good-by, M. l'Abbé; let

me recommend you, as a friend, not to write against the Jesuits another time."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRISONS OF THE INQUISITION.

A STRANGER visiting Rome, and gazing round that magnificent circular area, decorated with lofty porticoes, in front of St. Peter's, would hardly suppose that the gorgeous colonnade hid from view a low gloomy district, full of ruins, and intersected by narrow, winding, badly-paved streets. Should you take a conveyance to the Vatican the driver will bring you through one of the chief of these, stretching along the left side of the arcade, and winding on between the high walls of a little Campo Santo, constructed on the model of the one at Pisa, and, like it, made of earth from the Holy Land; and a large building, with a black front pierced by narrow windows, never penetrated by a single sunbeam, respecting which you doubt, as you stare at it, whether it is a house of correction, a prison, or a lepers' hospital. To say the truth, it is something of all these; it is the head-quarters of the Holy Office.

At the time of the revolution in Rome, when the Republic was proclaimed under constituted triumvirs, the first place which the populace visited was this terrible edifice. To them its capture seemed like a second taking of the Bastille. Just as that odious fortress had appeared to the French, as exhibiting the royal will of kings executed in prison cells, where justice is laughed to scorn, and the accused forbidden to defend himself, so the Romans looked upon the Holy Office as expressing the sovereign pleasure of a priesthood developed into a kingly power, supposing no one to dispute the doctrines which it sets forth, and menacing with eternal punishment those who incurred in any way its high displeasure. It was not against the Castle of St. Angelo that their wrath was directed. That they regarded as a relic of the ancient city—Adrian's mote. The fortress of the Popes they were willing to respect; the cells of the Inquisition were their game.

Not that they found many prisoners in them; but one was tenanted by a corpse. Many a day had it lain there, forgotten by the tribunal overhead; or, perhaps—horrible thought!—condemned by some vindictive inquisitor to a death of starvation.

That secret murder was doubtless horrible enough, but it was but one instance out of many. Since the Pontificate of Pius IX. the Inquisition has been greatly curbed, though his Holiness has never ventured to suppress it altogether.

There are few who are not familiar with the fearful details that were made known when the cells of the Inquisition were penetrated and laid bare in the revolution of 1848:—Skeletons chained up against the wall; others lying on the floor; bodies buried up to the shoulders in

quick-lime—the most horrible punishment of all; rooms full of instruments of torture; cells in the drains, where wretched victims, half-smothered in mud and pollution, used to be kept alive in their misery by a daily dole of bread; with an endless series of other atrocities no less appalling.

Some of the writers of these accounts ask how it was that the people failed to efface every vestige of the infamous abode. For our part, we are far from regretting the omission. On the contrary, we should have preferred to have seen every thing scrupulously preserved in the state in which it was found:—The shriveled-up corpses, the instruments of torture, the human mould in the under-ground passages, and that court, a hundred metres long, where victims were secretly burned after public exhibitions of the kind had become no longer safe. We should like to see all this kept up, as a sort of gloomy museum, open to public inspection, where men may learn what religious bigotry did in days gone by, and what it may again do at any moment, should a bigoted monk chance to mount the Pontifical throne. For it must be acknowledged that all the guilt of the Church lies at the monastery door. Monasticism, be it understood, is utterly without any Christian element—it has nothing of the spirit of the Church in it: it is but an accident, an excrescence more or less objectionable according to the character of its development, but always injurious. With this system have originated all the extravagances of religious bigotry; and the attentive student of the Church's history will see at once that the only error of the secular clergy during the fatal periods of pitiless persecution consisted in their weakly allowing full scope to the monks, and surrendering to them too easily their own proper rights. Granted that Pius V. decreed that the merciless punishment of heretics was true clemency, such language arose from the fact that Pius V., before he became Pope, was a Dominican, and that the Dominicans were installed at the Inquisition. On the other hand, if it be true that Pius IX., freed from counteracting influences, has shown himself the very reverse in spirit of this frantic bigot—if it be admitted that his gentle and amiable disposition is utterly opposed to every species of cruelty, it must be remembered that his shoulders have never been disgraced by the monk's gown.

Julio would have been incarcerated in one of the terrible Inquisition cells but for the circumstance that after the Roman crisis the French general thought that the Inquisition building, which had been half destroyed by the populace, with its extensive offices, was admirably suited, from its proximity to the Vatican and the Holy Office, to serve as a barrack for the French infantry.

What vicissitudes mark the history of human events! While the reader is casting his eye over these pages the tricolor is floating over the dark low gateway of the Holy Office. To the left stands a sentry-box; a peaceable Norman, a

jolly Poitiers lad, or a cheery Gascon, is mounting guard in front of that dreadful portal, which never opened once, except to entomb a victim.

Tourists who go the round of Roman curiosities really ought to pay a visit to the French barracks behind the circular colonnade, and ask to see the dungeons. Faugh! they smell of dead bodies still.

On the restoration of Pius IX., after his return from Gaeta, the Holy Office erected in haste a temporary building with a few low, narrow cells, in the hope that on the departure of the French army, and the consolidation of the Papal power, they would be able to recover their old abode.

Temporary indeed! Appropriate to a mere temporary institution—destined, like the tiara itself, to pass away before long, and living only on sufferance during that scant interval which diplomacy has characterized by the sapient title of the *Statu quo*.

So pertinaciously do institutions dying of old age cling to the traditions of their past, even more than in the days of their highest prosperity—observing the least important of their customs and rules with scrupulous fidelity—that there is at this moment a president of the Holy Office (a cardinal of the Roman Church); a keeper of the seals; a commissary general, who is always a Dominican; an assessor, invariably a prelate and chamberlain of the Pope; councilors belonging to the various religious orders; officers and ministers; and all as thoroughly organized as if the power of the institution were as supreme as ever, with this one trifling difference, however, that the altars erected once for the glory of God and the holy chair smoke no longer with sacrificial victims! The Sacred Congregation holds meeting three times a week: on Monday at the establishment of the Holy Office, where the commissary general and the councilors assemble; on Wednesday at the Convent of Santa-Maria Sopra Minerva, belonging to the Dominican fathers; and on Thursdays under the presidency of the Pope, to consult on the causes for trial and matters connected with the inquisition and heresy. Here the cardinals take their places at the board, more or fewer as they are designated by his Holiness, with a large sprinkling of prelates, and learned theologians picked out from all the various religious orders, and decorated with the title of councilors of the Holy Office. Julio and Laura Doni were immured each in a separate dungeon—a measure beneficial, doubtless, to the Pontificate of Pius IX., and very calculated to promote the salvation of the Church, while a judicial information was, according to custom, being prepared against them.

The assessor intrusted with getting up the edicts repaired to the prison in his official capacity, and summoned Julio to appear before him.

The four following accusations formed the points on which he subjected him to a severe questioning:

First, that he, Julio de la Clavière, a priest of the diocese of T——, had willfully and deliberately broken into the choir-cloister of the reverend Benedictine nuns of Notre Dame de Forcassi; such act being opposed to the privileges and rights of the order of the Society of St. Bennet, and strictly prohibited by their canons.

Next, that he had perpetrated an act of sacrilege in a holy place in the execution of his outrageous assault—a crime punishable with the galleys:

Furthermore, that this sacrilege had been committed during a service of special solemnity, and in the presence of the assembled faithful, to their great scandal and dismay.

Lastly, that he, the afore-mentioned priest, had written a libelous pamphlet against the sacred order of the Jesuits; an order specially devoted to the interest of the Papal throne, and solemnly recognized with approbation by the Sovereign Pontiffs; that he had, by an act of forgery, attributed an anonymous publication to a cardinal of the Roman Church; that this publication, or religious testament, as it was called, was full of unwarrantable assertions, that it savored strongly of the deadliest heresy, and was peculiarly repugnant to the views of the faithful.

The assessor's report was based upon this inquiry. No bringing up of the accused before a judge; no witnesses examined on both sides; no counsel for the defense; not even a sentence always, except when it was advantageous to publish it; in that case the judgment was posted up on the doors of the principal churches; being generally ten or twelve years' imprisonment, according as the accused was more or less friendless, or had no money, or means of getting any, to purchase his freedom.

Julio replied with brief, simple dignity to the questions of the assessor. At the end of the examination he was told to sign the paper of inquiry.

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

Such was the first and last act in this singular exhibition of ecclesiastical justice. Julio had every prospect of remaining in his cell for many a long year, untroubled by president, commissary general, assessor, or councilors. The authorities of the Holy Office are in the habit of undertaking the permanent charge of their prisoners, and would be very much surprised if any one interfered with their arrangement. The door quietly closed between Julio and the world.

But we have omitted to describe his cell. Imagine a hole ten feet long by six wide; no window; one door with a grating in it, protected by iron bars, to admit the light; a pallet, a little stool, a small table, an earthen pot, and the bare ground. And the tenant of this wretched place was one who, had he followed the time-honored, well-worn path—had he omitted the dream of Catholic reform, had he shrunk from audacious handling of the sacred ark of the Church, the Company of Jesus—had he swelled

with others the priestly mass, the vast majority, crying up the temporal power of the Pope, extolling the Jesuits' sanctity and zeal, fawning on episcopal omnipotence—had this been his course, these his views, this his policy and his attitude, instead of being "in carcere duro," he might have been lounging at this moment in an archbishop's drawing-room, caressed, cuddled, applauded, receiving, day after day, new honors and rewards ecclesiastical: soon vicar-general, then bishop, then cardinal. Positively, these superior intellects, these deep thinkers, are dreadfully wanting in tact. Julio, for instance, was very foolish!

There he lies, meanwhile, the disdained off-scouring of the priesthood—the last of the Hussite race, and of those other noble martyr spirits, who dared to speak as they thought of Papal Rome. Ay, Sirs, there he lies; and should his jailer perchance forget for a few coming days to toss him his scrap of prison bread, there he will lie till death arrives, summoned by the unutterable pangs of starvation. In his expiring agony he may gnaw his flesh from his bones; and when he is gone none will think upon his corpse—no, nor even, when the door is opened to admit another to be dealt with after the same fashion, will they care to remove the dead in his decay!

CHAPTER V.

LANS-LE-BOURG.

QUITTING Upper Italy to return to France, and crossing the border of the rich basin of the Po, there rises up before the traveler the immense mountain chain of the Western Alps. The period of their emerging from their calcareous basin was one marked by the mightiest convulsions in the physical history of our earth. The elevation of the Alps, of which the Pyrenees, though the date of their irruption is more recent, appear to be a continuation, divides Europe into two sections. Of these the most extensive, to the north and west, is cut off, in every respect of climate, habits, and manners, from the southern and eastern. Above the Alps is Europe properly so called; below, three immense peninsulas, Greece, Italy, and Spain, the cradles of the Greek and Latin races; this district is more thoroughly Oriental in its characteristics than the rest of the Continent. The olive, the orange, and the palm proclaim it as the East.

To cross that barrier, on returning from Rome by the Apennine chain, between Florence and Bologna, there are two grand roads, prepared at an immense labor and expense, along the sides of the Alpine ridge: one by Mount Cenis, leading into Savoy; and another by Simplon, into Switzerland. Italy is still in the height of its glorious autumn weather; oranges may be gathered in the fields of Monte di Gaëta, at the entrance of that celebrated Campania where Hannibal fell, and where masses of piled-up

snow array with their white drapery the gigantic summits of the Alps. Nor is it only for a few hours, as in the Pyrenees, that the traveler has to battle against snow and piercing cold, but throughout the entire route. Indeed, he may be deemed a lucky adventurer who finds the track unburied, or who escapes the perilous chance of guides losing their way.

Should you escape the many dangers that throng this mountain journey, after a day of incredible fatigue, the least peril of which would be to perish from the cold, the first town you would reach on the French side would be Lans-le-Bourg. There a large hotel, with great chimneys containing roaring fires, presents the appearance of a sumptuous Louvre; while escape for a time from an outside temperature which turns the breath into icicles, even though it be enjoyed in the interior of a shut-up carriage, is welcome as a landing in the Fortunate Islands.

So here we are at Lans-le-Bourg, on an autumn day, as has been already said.

In the midst of this unpretending village, which has been designated, for reasons unknown to ourselves, by the more high-sounding title of a town, is a modest, unpretending church. There is a priest at the altar—a tall, strong man, whose stern features, contracted by the dents and furrows in his face, indicate the suffering through which he has passed. On his forehead is a scar, recently healed. He might have been taken for a Crimean soldier come back to Savoy, and seeking, in the quiet discharge of priestly functions, a pleasant repose after the hardships of campaigning. He has a deep bass voice, with tender, musical modulations, which give it a peculiar charm. His movements are rapid and abrupt—a circumstance, however, which does not affect his dignified discharge of the sacred duties he has undertaken.

He goes through the ceremonial hurriedly, and celebrates the mass in true military style. Then giving his blessing to five or six females kneeling near the railing, the service over, he retires.

The church is cold, but a stove in the sacristy diffuses there a pleasant warmth. The priest disrobes, kneels before a prie-dieu, and repeats certain thanksgiving prayers inscribed on a card hanging near, and once more rises.

Turning to the sacristan, he asks whether there are any sick to be visited that day.

"I know of no one dangerously ill, M. le Vicaire," replies that functionary. "There is a stranger, however, who arrived from Italy two days ago, at the Hôtel de la Porte, and who is in great distress. Both she and the driver who brought her found the passage of Mount Cenis terribly severe. They were all but buried in the snow."

"I understand."

And accordingly, in the afternoon, the curate of Lans-le-Bourg took his way, wrapped up in a

well-wadded over-coat, toward the Hôtel de la Porte.

One of the waiters asked the young lady if she had any objection to receive a visit from M. le Vicaire, and returned with a request that he would come in.

He introduced himself with that quiet ease and gentle sympathy of manner which invalids prize so highly. A smiling physician or priest, to such persons, is always a welcome visitor, the very sight of whom is an instant relief.

It will have already been divined that the stranger was no other than Louise. Carried to a considerable distance along the Volscarceta road by Jacomo's horse, she had eventually reached the Tuscan territory, overwhelmed with anxiety as to her brother's fate. Jacomo had crept out of his hiding-place in the bush, after having witnessed the capture of Julio, fully convinced that the young Frenchman, once in the hands of the sbirri, would have to expiate his achievements at Forcassi by imprisonment for life. His first anxiety was to recover his runaway nag, and to escort Louise to the limits of the Papal States. Hurrying along the road to Volscarceta, he soon succeeded in discovering her track, by marks which none but a smuggler could have detected, and reached the frontier town almost immediately after her.

It was necessary that he should tell her the mournful truth respecting her brother; and in doing so he was at length convinced that the two were really related as they said they were, and, moreover, that they were the victims of a merciless persecution. Rewarded handsomely for the service he had already rendered, he pledged himself to still further efforts in her cause, and gave her, in her painful emergency, the wisest counsel which his experience could suggest.

"Your presence in the Roman States," he urged, "is useless, and even dangerous, since nothing would be easier than for your enemies to lay hands upon you, under the pretense of claiming to know how, and by what circumstances, you became connected with the convent at Forcassi, and what might be the nature of the engagements binding you to them. Now in this precious land of ours an inquiry may be protracted during six years. Not unfrequently the prisoner even, and his alleged crime, are alike forgotten. So you had better go back to France. Your brother is in the hands of the Holy Office—fearful fellows those to have to deal with. It will require a very powerful intervention to rescue him—and this you must try to obtain. Ply the Imperial Government in his behalf. Go to the Emperor himself, if such a step is necessary."

Louise saw at once the good sense of his advice. It was useless for her to risk her own safety by going after her brother. She must try and save him. Full of indescribable grief, she set out from the Tuscan frontier, and traveled to Mount Cenis by Florence and Turin, hoping to get on as quickly as possible to Ly-

ons and Paris, that she might set about her cherished task without delay.

The passage of Mount Cenis had proved exceedingly difficult. The carriage became imbedded in the snow, whence Louise, half dead and frozen, was extricated by the monks of the hospice, under whose care she passed two most anxious days. At first her onward progress threatened to be indefinitely interrupted. It turned out, however, on investigation, that the conveyance, though half shattered, was capable of being sufficiently repaired to convey them to Lans-le-Bourg. Meanwhile her excessive fatigues, added to her overwhelming solicitude, told powerfully on her enfeebled health. Those few days had made havoc in her beauty, and added years to her apparent age. Her solitary, deserted position—her terrible suspense—the all but despair which weighed her down, were ruining her spirits and constitution; and her physical frame, always predisposed to delicacy, could no longer bear up under the pressure of mental suffering.

Accustomed to form his conclusions as to the people he visited, the curate of Lans-le-Bourg saw at once that her state of health was not precarious, but that the trouble under which she labored, whatever it might be, demanded instant attention. So he made no mention of confession or the last sacraments, but cheered her up in her present sufferings, assuring her that a little rest would considerably alleviate them, and leading her to thank the all-merciful God, who sustains His people in safety in the presence of danger, and has secret designs of His own in every event of life.

His genial words at once won her confidence. She saw at once that the man before her was one to be relied upon.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," she said, "I am in great need of your advice; my position is most embarrassing."

And she described, as briefly as possible, her brother's arrest, her own flight from the Pontifical States, and her intention of going alone to Paris to procure official interference in his behalf."

As she related her short history the abbé colored violently; he seemed intensely, almost greedily, interested in the very smallest details. With an agitated voice he ventured the inquiry,

"Do you come from T——?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Are you the sister of the Abbé Julio de la Clavière, the vicar of St. Aventin?"

"I am. Do you know my brother?"

"I owe him my life, young lady. I was once vicar of the valley of Lys. Your brother is my benefactor, to whom I am infinitely indebted. My purse, my heart, my all, are at your service. Command me in whatever way you please."

"You are right, Sir, in what you just now said. Providence, indeed, has its purposes in our affairs. I have been brought to a friend of Julio's. You revive all my courage. That prop which I needed I have now found. I

shall no longer have to tread my difficult path alone. You will save brother and sister together."

"I will do my utmost, at all events. While you proceed to Paris, to press your appeal upon the Government for your brother's release, I will go straight to Rome, and see if there is no way of snatching him from the claws of those villains at the Holy Office. The Inquisition will have to be very sharp to thwart me. There are at present in my desk notes to the amount of many thousand francs, which I got from an uncle who, as it turns out, has died in the very nick of time. They will act as a golden key, with which one might unlock the door of the Vatican itself."

Louise raised her eyes to Heaven in grateful acknowledgment, and stretched out her hand to the noble-hearted, generous priest.

In a few days the fever had entirely disappeared, and she was strong enough to undertake the journey to Paris. Loubère, meanwhile, had crossed the Alps, passed rapidly through Turin and Florence, and arrived at Rome.

CHAPTER VI.

LOUBÈRE AT THE GÊSU.

ON reaching Rome, Loubère, straightforward as he was, and consequently a bad hand at playing a hypocritical game, saw, nevertheless, that to attain his object he required the utmost caution. His task was indeed difficult, especially as he had to avoid the suspicions of the Jesuits, ever on the alert, through their police, to discover any threatened hostility. The Pyreneans combine with their mountain energy something of the astuteness of the Gascon, whose blood they often share, and hence are quite capable of being thorough Gascons at a pinch. Utterly free from any thing like baseness or deceit, they have, for all that, a marvelous instinct and readiness of resource in cases of danger. Moreover, in a country so full of natural perils, this aptitude for adventure and hairbreadth escape is greatly developed, without at all impairing the honesty of their character. Take, for example, the peasant of Auvergne; in his arduous and critical mountain life he displays, under his apparent geniality, all the clever astuteness of which we have been speaking.

Loubère concocted a complete scheme for his guidance. He did not at first take up his quarters at the Hôtel de la Minerve, where he would have infallibly become an object of scrutiny in the centre of a priestly crowd collected there from all corners of the Catholic world, but in the little out-of-the-way street delle Vecchierelle, very winding and very unobserved, lost, in fact, in the centre of the vast buildings of the Gêsu. There he obtained, at the modest sum of a few paolis a month, a room more comfortable even than he required for the retired and unobtrusive style in which he proposed residing in the Eternal City.

He repaired immediately to the cardinal vicar, who acted under the Pope as Bishop of Rome, and presented for due inspection his ecclesiastical vouchers, which were strictly in order. Being asked in what church he wished to officiate he replied that he was utterly unacquainted with Rome.

"Where are you residing?" asked the secretary.

"In the Via della Vecchierelle."

"Very well, then you are close to the church of the Gesù. As you are French you had better officiate there."

"Thank you. But haven't they a numerous staff of priests already?"

"Not many just now, I fancy."

During this brief dialogue the cardinal's secretary had been much struck by the manly, honest face and figure of Loubère. He felt himself instinctively drawn to him; and from motives of kindness offered him a letter of recommendation to the Rev. Father Sacriste of the Gesù.

"I am extremely obliged to you, Sir," said Loubère.

And, offering his hand, he thanked him very heartily.

The official having given him a few lines in Italian, a language which he knew perfectly, written very carefully and legibly, he added them to his other papers, and took his leave.

The very first thing the next morning he repaired to the Gesù, fully attired as a French priest—a garb which is always effective in Rome, where priests generally are not over particular in their dress. Loubère presented his "celebret," together with the letter he had received.

"I bid you heartily welcome," said the sacristy father.

And every facility was offered him, with that obsequious courtesy so characteristic of the Jesuits. To which Loubère, who was desirous to be perfectly free without shocking his Jesuit friend, replied:

"I shall trouble you with very little of my company, reverend father, during my stay in Rome, as there are several excursions in the neighborhood which I wish to make. On these days you won't see me at the Gesù."

"You are entirely your own master with us, M. l'Abbé. But wouldn't you like to be introduced to some of our fathers? We always give a hearty greeting to French priests—many of them are French themselves."

An idea struck Loubère.

"Have you a Father de Cambiac among you?"

"Yes, we have. He is one of our most respected members."

This Father de Cambiac belonged to the powerful family of the Marquis de Cambiac, one of the richest and most illustrious in old Languedoc. He had been a fellow-pupil of his at the seminary at T—. Moreover, they had conceived for one another that warm affection of early years—one of the most generous characteristics of youth, and which survives, as a rule, many a vicissitude of after-life.

This worthy man had become a Jesuit, being about the last man in the world qualified for the position by his natural disposition. He had been eagerly received by the ambitious society, so partial to great names, and had made rapid progress by virtue of his high descent—a qualification more appreciated in Rome than any where else. The new Jesuit was passionately fond of numismatic studies, a taste to which the society by no means objected. Under the pretense of furnishing him, in a large city, with every possible facility for pursuing his favorite researches, they had brought him to Rome, where his simple integrity, his amiability, and the unmistakable evidence which he gave of being a genuine scholar, soon won for him general admiration. So he came to be a prominent man among them, and was enrolled as one of their great council.

Whether it was that Loubère felt in himself a lively return of his old affection for his dear abbé marquis, as he used to call him at the seminary, or whether from an instinctive desire to get admission within the mysterious Gesù, or whether, again, because it suited his plans to clear himself of all possible suspicion in any single quarter by his cordial relations with one of the most dignified members of the order, he rejoined, eagerly:

"Then Father de Cambiac is here! Ah, so much the better. I shall, indeed, rejoice to meet him again. We were old seminarists together. I am greatly indebted to you for the gratifying intelligence. I will come and see him to-morrow."

"I will tell him of your intended call."

"You are very kind."

Accordingly, the next day, Loubère, who by this time had assumed the air of an important personage, called at the Gesù, and inquired for Father de Cambiac. The porter intimated his arrival, and the next moment the two young Frenchmen were together again, recalling those happy by-gone days when imagination invests every thing with its bewitching spell, and hearts yearning after such healthy interchanges cement the first indissoluble ties of life-long friendship.

The Jesuit, who had all the geniality of an honest student, received him with the sincerest affection. The memories which Loubère revived of those years of the past, the flight of which every man regrets, with his extreme ingenuousness, for he was not in the least changed—recalled thoroughly to his friend's recollection the "ours Pyrénéen" of old times, as he used once to call him.

"We won't stay here any longer, dear friend—come to my room."

And passing through a long corridor, and mounting a stone staircase which led to the first floor, they reached an immense gallery, lighted by narrow windows very high up. A series of apartments stretched away to their left, and the third in the row was that of Father de Cambiac.

For a dignitary of the order it was by no

means costly in its arrangements. The room was spacious and airy, opening into an inner apartment, which again admitted into the passage, and served at once as a library and bed-chamber. Indeed, all the apartments on this floor were exactly alike. Each father had his large room and his library. Loubère left the Gesù thoroughly delighted with his recovered friend, who made him promise to come and see him frequently during his stay in Rome.

"I will give orders," he added, "that you may be admitted at once to my quarters at the hours I have just named. We can chat about our beloved France and dear old Languedoc. It will be 'lours' and 'le marquis' over again."

On one occasion Loubère found him almost in tears. The conversation soon turned upon the cause of his distress, they had become so increasingly intimate in these frequent visits. De Cambiac opened his heart to him more freely than he had ever done before.

"No, my friend," he said, "I am not happy here. You were correct in your suspicions, for I am not satisfied with myself for being in this place. Nothing can exceed the utter want of heart in those around me, for every one is watching every body else. They pay court to me ostensibly in the most extravagant manner, but they hate me at the bottom, because they say I am devoid of the spirit of the order. 'You never have any report to make upon the other fathers' is the complaint against me. Think you that that is a very grievous charge? Can it be supposed for a moment that a man like me, busied in his studies, and snatching grudgingly a few moments of necessary recreation, for which the time is only too short, can be bothered with spying upon the defects in manner and talk of those around him? What an ungracious task to discharge! I have plenty to do without such an occupation as that. Oh, how bitterly I regret the free life of a priest outside! God is my record that I would never have disgraced it; but I ought not to have been inveigled into this iron system of wheels within wheels, where ideas, feelings, personal liberty—all are regulated as by clock-work, with a daily precision the eternal monotony of which knows no disturbance. It is death to the soul; it is lingering suicide. Yet what have I been doing? I shall have to confess to my spiritual father the indiscretion of which I have been guilty in making this open admission to you. My God! my God! what indescribable torture! Oh! is not sacred confidence like ours justified by the inward voice of conscience? and yet my vows oblige me to reveal all that I have said to you. Were I to conceal any thing, that very concealment would be sin, and then would come remorse and all the torments it entails. So I must make a clean breast of it, and bury myself again in this chaos of littlenesses which unnerve me as a man, and by no means elevate me as a Christian. Dear Loubère, how I envy you your humble curacy at Lans-le-Bourg! And look you! such is the wretchedness of this unendurable existence that

this moment of unreserved intercourse with you will cost me very dear. I must acknowledge who it is with whom I have had this treasonable conversation. I must repeat all that you have said in order to clear you of any suspicion of having come here to injure the order and wean me from my connection with it. Ah, that fatal connection! How I grieve that I ever listened to the unhappy impulse which brought it about! Happy shall I be if my compulsory confession of what has passed between us in no way injures you, and if my only punishment be the deprivation of your society! Just see, my friend, to what a condition they fall who belong to a society who sets itself up as a universal model. Espionage and tyranny, instead of those glorious evangelical bonds which were designed to unite brothers in the communion of mutual love. But come, at all events, to-morrow or the next day. I do not confess before Saturday, so till then I am free."

Loubère was unable to reply; he grasped the hand of his unhappy friend and left without a word. He was unable to return before the Friday, nor did he reach the building till ten minutes after the hour named by De Cambiac. Full of his own thoughts, he threaded hastily the long corridor, thinking of the distressing condition of the poor Jesuit marquis. Reaching the door of the room which he took for his friend's he found it closed, while that of the adjoining library was open. Loubère was on sufficiently intimate terms to enter without ceremony, as he expected the other to make his appearance every minute. He entered the library, closing the door which led into the gallery, so that no one might see him, ready to open it as soon as De Cambiac returned, and even chuckling at the surprise he would occasion him when he came back and found him ransacking his book-shelves.

He had, however, made a mistake; his friend's room was two or three doors off. He was in the private study of the general of the Jesuits, whose suit of apartments, opening one into another, occupied the centre of the range. Being, like the majority of priests, very fond of books, and fully under the impression that De Cambiac would turn up in a few minutes, he set to work to examine the volumes nearest to his hand. They were spiritual treatises in different languages, very much alike, and bound with great taste, though not in a costly fashion, or perhaps, to speak more correctly, in a style of simple costliness. He admired the beauty of the editions—the fineness of the morocco, the handsome clasps. Restoring them to their place, he noticed a second row concealed behind them, bound with the same taste, but far more richly. Curiosity is a powerful incentive. Moreover, he was in a friend's room, and it never occurred to him that he was doing any thing incorrect. These books consisted of a collection of the French literature of the day, and the first book in the row, to his great amusement, proved to be one of the romances of Paul de Kock. Loubère himself was not over particular in his read-

ing; still, to discover one of the most lax of French novels, splendidly bound, on the shelves of a Jesuit dignitary, did seem a little extraordinary.

"After all," he said, "Pope Gregory XVI., that furious absolutist, had his moments of quiet indulgence over the pages of this writer, so my dear marquis may well be allowed the same innocent amusement. All the same, I should like to know whether he ever mentions the fact to his spiritual director."

But picture his amazement when, just as he was hastening to replace the volume for fear of being caught in his very questionable inspection, a third row revealed itself, the binding of the most eccentric description, and as utterly unstudied as it is possible to conceive. The title of the first of these books, written on a roll of paper pasted to the back, was *Confessions of the Fathers*. In this roll was an alphabetical list, carefully arranged. His curiosity fully aroused, he opened the mysterious repertory. With an eagerness easily understood he hunted out his friend's initial. At the same moment a sudden apprehension darted into his mind.

"Have I not made a mistake?" he said, to himself. "Is it possible that this is not De Cambiac's library?"

He could no longer doubt the truth of the case when he found, in its proper place, a complete summary of the young Jesuit's confessions. But here we would not exaggerate. It is true that, underneath the confession of each father, their complete description and history had been added; but no particular sin was set down; the seal of confession had not in the least been violated. The Jesuits take good care always to keep every thing square with the Almighty; they know how far they think they may go in their hypocrisy to the Most High.

De Cambiac was photographed to the life. His simplicity and geniality; his want of tact and reserve; his very moderate attachment to the order, to which he would never have belonged had he not been drawn into it; his general disposition; his impression that he was retained among the Jesuits only, according to the register, that they might avail themselves of his numismatic knowledge; his deep and real piety, together with his constant hankering after the unbridled life of a secular priest—all this was set down in a telling and masterly style—the man himself was there.

Meanwhile the time was rapidly slipping away.

"If I am not in De Cambiac's room where am I?" thought Loubère.

The place was profoundly still; no noise in the next room, any more than in the long corridor which he had just passed through on his way to this fatal door. Prudence and self-preservation suggested to him that he had better leave the place, go straight to the parlor, and inquire openly after his friend. But he was a bold man; the adventure was exciting; other queer little registers were there, entitled

Confessions of Strangers, Enemies of the Society; and these attracted him irresistibly.

"Let us see whether they have got poor Julio down among the enemies. He is entitled to be there and no mistake."

He opened the register and turned to his friend's name. As he had suspected, foremost in the list of deadliest foes was described elaborately his bosom friend.

The list of crimes laid to his charge was complete. It contained the minutest details, such as one could scarcely imagine the acutest spies capable of obtaining. His tastes, his private life, his relations with his sister—even his nocturnal reception of the young Pyrenean girl in the presbytery of St. Aventin.

Loubère—his interest fully aroused, and under the influence of the most feverish curiosity—took little heed of the flying minutes as he devoured this private record. He had got as far as the expedition of the famous Denis, who had been enjoined by the fathers to allure Julio to Rome, when suddenly he heard a noise in the adjoining room. Hastily restoring the books to their proper order he detected the sound of numerous footsteps, and at length comprehended the full peril of his position.

To be detected in so flagrant a delinquency, and arrested either as a robber or a spy, and to be rewarded for his rash curiosity either with one of the cells of the Inquisition or with the convict prison of Terracina—such was the unmistakable and by no means agreeable prospect that presented itself to his mind. But what could he do? To leave the room abruptly, at the risk of arousing the attention of the fathers, whom he correctly supposed to be assembled in the next room, appeared to him the height of madness.

Instead of evincing that prompt decision which in moments of danger marks resolute spirits like his he felt an unaccountable terror creeping over him. His knees shook; he stood riveted to the spot, as though by a supernatural spell.

During that terrible crisis chairs had been brought into the other apartment and silence immediately ensued. Loubère overheard as distinctly as though he had been in the room the customary Latin invocation to the Holy Spirit slowly uttered by the weak voice of an old man. Again a fresh sound of chairs being moved, and again a silence.

It was evident that they were assembled in council, and he saw at once that he had the incredible opportunity of being present at the supreme deliberations of that great company, really composed of so small a number of men, but which, by means of its restless ambition, had exercised for three hundred years such a stupendous influence over the Catholic world.

Meanwhile he remained in the most agonizing suspense. There is a fear unlike all other fears. It is but a light thing to be on a field of battle at the cannon's mouth. No sooner has nature recovered its first nervous surprise, and drunk in excitement from the thundering volleys, than

all sense of apprehension vanishes. Bullets do not kill every one; and each reassures himself with the hope that he will escape. The true, terrible, incurable terror is the dread of an unknown peril.

Loubère, under its fullest influence, was completely paralyzed. However there was nothing for it but to play his part to the end, all unable as he was to adopt any better course or devise a means of escape from his fearful position.

Leaning his elbows on the table before him, his hands clenched together, his body rigid with dismay, he awaited the issue in a state of stupefaction, like some abject suppliant prostrate at the shrine of a pitiless god.

The discussion had already commenced. His situation made him an attentive listener to all that was going on; and his unnatural excitement caused what he heard to be carved, as it were, into the recesses of his brain.

The old man who had uttered the prayer was evidently the general. He summed up with great clearness in a sort of abstract—which Loubère compared to a President's message to Congress—the position of the order in the five quarters of the globe. The Jesuits were prospering wonderfully in England, in the United States, and in Canada where they were omnipotent, while in Belgium the bishops and the secular clergy were completely in their power.

But in Poland they were even more supreme. There, thanks to the exceptional position of the country writhing under the Russian yoke, their rule was a most thorough reality.

"My instructions," continued the general, "to our brethren in Poland, and I trust you will approve of them, are these: To do every thing to keep up those national antipathies which tend so effectually to promote religious enmities. To depict the Russians on all occasions as infidels, as enemies of the Church, as persecutors of the faith, as tyrants against whom any measures are justifiable. I am in constant correspondence with the Polish refugees in Paris, among whom are eager longings, which are daily gaining strength, and which the old Czartoriski will have some difficulty in restraining. Here is their political scheme in which they are eager for our help, relying upon our efforts to bring about a religious revolution when they will emancipate themselves from the Russian yoke. The plan, long matured, communicated even at Paris to many illustrious personages round the French Emperor, with the view of securing his interest in the cause of Poland, is as follows: Patriotic hymns are to be sung in all the churches. This will disturb the Russians, who will set their police on the move, and call out their troops; the same hymns to be sung in the public places where large gatherings take place. The order to be, never to appear under arms. Should the soldiers receive directions to disperse the people, they are to fall on their knees and present their bosoms to the Cossack's spear. We have sounded a few of the organs of the press, even of the liberal organs. All favor Poland, and the sym-

pathies of the revolutionists, for the nationalities as they are called, will greatly aid us. The originators of the scheme count on a general cry of reproach and execration against Russia for trampling down unarmed and defenseless multitudes. There will be an enthusiastic shout for the martyr-nation. It will be impossible in that case for Russia to do otherwise than constitute a new kingdom of Poland."

"But Russia is perfectly able to stand out, and carry on a war of extermination against this unhappy nation."

"Quite true; but France will never allow it. She has constituted herself the Don Quixote of the nationalities. She will support Poland, and either she will succeed in her aim, and we along with her, or else she will array a coalition against herself, in which case—"

"In which case?" inquired another of those present.

"In which case the revolution will be abandoned for some time, and that will be all the better for us. The issues are in the hands of God. Only let us confine ourselves to the part which we have to play in Poland; there is no doubt that the support lent by the clergy to the national movement is attracting to us, more and more, the attachment of that country. Should the evil days we apprehend overtake us; should we be expelled from the kingdom of Italy, and even from the Papal States; should we be denied a refuge in any of the emancipated countries, as we may very reasonably apprehend, still we shall have a safe asylum among this people so devoted to Catholicism, where we shall be able to reconstitute ourselves, and wait for better days."

And then the general went on to speak at length of the condition of the order in the Roman States.

"Assuming the possibility of the Bourbons being reinstated at Naples, we must promote especially the interests of the Queen-mother. Besides, the young consort, Maria Sophia, of Bavaria, should she recover her influence over the feeble Francis II., would force him into a path of liberal concessions, and inspire him with all that mistrust of our order which she has exhibited here. She will never forgive us for having been supported at Bavaria by Lola Montès, so we must do our best to sow dissensions between the royal pair. Francis II., left to himself, is sure to abdicate in favor of the son of the Queen-mother, and then Naples will be ours. It is idle to avoid seeing that our position here is uncertain in the extreme. The precarious condition of the temporal power shows us pretty plainly what we may expect. Whether the Pope remains at the Vatican, or betakes himself to some one of the Catholic nations, in the hope of rousing their sympathetic aid in favor of his restoration to his dominions, we shall still have to leave Rome. We are hated here more than the papacy itself. The clergy themselves, exasperated by our ascendancy over them, are our bitter enemies, quite as much as the revolution-

ists, and will triumph equally in our fall. What care they for it; they will remain. These men, who only know how to baptize and to bury, have nothing to apprehend from a people devoted to the dry routine of ordinances, and ready to sell the Pope and cardinals at a moment's notice, provided only they keep their Madonna. Moreover, the secular clergy are Italians, and naturally sympathize with the Italian party. We Jesuits have no nationality, our society is our country; we are cosmopolitans, and in that our real strength lies; but still this effectually isolates us from the various nations who look upon us, and causes us to be regarded on all sides as foreigners. Hence the reason why the Italians will keep their priests, while they drive us into an exile which may last for a long, long day."

There was a moment's pause. Then came a debate, or rather, in parliamentary language, a conversation on the critical position of the papacy. One of the fathers ventured an opinion, which was ill-received by the majority.

"Surely it would be as well to sympathize with the revolution?"

"Sint ut sunt aut non sint," said another father. "This resolute motto has saved us, and it will yet save the temporal power. Rome knows how to put down the forward movement by an invincible resistance of all efforts at forcing her to yield. The actual struggle shows her real strength."

"But every human institution must move on," continued the father who had suggested the conciliatory course.

In a moment hands were flung up and voices raised in indignant protest against the luckless author of this unwelcome sentiment, no other than De Cambiac, whose voice Loubère had little difficulty in recognizing.

The general resumed.

"The day before yesterday I had an audience with his Holiness. The worthy Pope, who is not overfond of us, repeated his customary assurances of good-will toward our order; while I, for my part, renewed our assurance of unbounded devotion to his interests. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I am very sure that your most illustrious society is ready to exert itself to an infinite extent for the protection of the papal chair.' I told him I would repeat to you what he had said, and that you would be delighted to hear it. I found him depressed and full of anxious thoughts, failing in health daily. It's a marvel that, with his epileptic fits and diseased leg, he lasts so long. Though we might easily have a Pope more heartily devoted to our interests, he is nevertheless in that position that he can't get on without us, and he knows it. He said to me, shrewdly enough, that experience had taught him to recognize his true friends better than he had hitherto done. The day is far off that will see him attempt to annihilate us by the kind help of Father Theiner; and in common with all the various orders jealous of our ascendancy, he is becoming more tractable. Misfortune is bringing this about.

"As his Holiness happened to be in a talkative vein, he went on to tell me of the demands made by the French ambassador for the liberation from our prisons of a young priest named Julio, who had done us so much mischief in France, and whom we have had the good fortune to arrest. 'Your Holiness,' I replied, 'would not desire to see that enemy of the Church at large. Priests are everlastingly at the bottom of all kinds of evil in society: what havoc did not Luther and Calvin occasion. The promptitude shown by Gregory XVI. in humbling by a blow the pride of Lamennais, arrested in France an explosion as dangerous as the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century. This Julio is a second Lamennais—more dangerous even than the first. The one was a desperate man, and attacked even his friends; the other is a destroying wolf arrayed in sheep's clothing.'

"My argument appeared to weigh considerably with the Pope. 'Perhaps you are right,' he said. 'At all events, popes are not in the habit of interfering with the acts of the Holy Office. I will pray to God and the Immaculate Virgin for guidance in the matter.' Thereupon I went forthwith to the cardinal minister, who is thoroughly on our side. You know, fathers, that he would be ungrateful in the extreme were he not: as we have greatly aided him in amassing his enormous fortune—his millions are powerful arguments in our favor. He grasped my hand most cordially, and I told him the particulars of my interview with his Holiness. 'Don't be afraid,' was his reply. 'He won't move in the matter, I'll answer for that; your protégé is safe enough under lock and key.' So we need have no apprehensions on that score."

The eager interest of Loubère all this time never flagged for a moment. However, he couldn't help, from time to time, casting an eager look on that door so unfortunately closed upon him. Meanwhile, possibly the Jesuit council might reveal to him some still more startling discovery.

"Since I am in for it," he said to himself, "an hour or so more or less won't make much difference. Patience is all I require. I shall manage to get away somehow or other."

His courage was reviving by degrees.

"Bah!" he muttered, at length, "they can't eat me."

"And now for the financial report," continued the general. "Our expenses, as compared with our accumulating revenues, are very limited. It must be allowed that this hateful modern civilization increases capital, at all events; so we could not do otherwise than make our profit out of the greatly enlarged facilities which it affords. Our small savings immediately after our re-establishment, thanks to excellent investments, have realized enormous sums. Lately, money has poured in in heaps. Legacies have been more numerous this year than ever: to such an extent, that, during the last three months, our section at Paris has been able

to take up, by my orders, two thousand shares in the Seville-Xeres-Cadiz Company, to the value of a million; two thousand in the South Austrian Lombard Company, at 500 francs a share, value a million; a thousand Saragossan bonds, at 500 francs, value 500,000 francs: making a grand total of 2,500,000 francs.

"There will be in the next six months, unless any unforeseen accidents occur, all the accumulating interest, our other revenues from our Havre and Bordeaux ships, our establishments at San Francisco, our commercial houses, with donations, and recoveries from the sale of estates bequeathed to us. The total of our net profits during the year will exceed six millions."

At this stage Loubère's anxiety returned with renewed force; it appeared more than probable that the financial statement would close the proceedings. It was a critical moment.

The question was, how to escape?

Should the lock which he would have to attack make any noise; should any one come suddenly upon him and detect him escaping from the private apartment of the general, what an occurrence that would be at the Gesù! And even if he escaped out of the room unheard, he might be observed in his way down, and the porter be warned. However, that was his only course.

In a state of the greatest possible excitement, as though he were on the eve of committing some desperate crime, and blushing up to the roots of his hair, he stepped across to the door, grasped the handle of the lock, turned it as quietly as possible, and let the bolt slip back gently into its position. Unfortunately, however, the hinges wanted oiling; so the result of opening the door was a creaking sound, which no one could mistake, and which was distinctly audible in the inner room.

"Who can that be in my apartment at this hour?" said the general. "Just go and see who it is," he added, to Father de Cambiac, who happened to be nearest to the door.

He rose and went into the library, perceived that the outer entrance was open, looked through into the long passage, and saw a priest, whom he recognized at once to be Loubère, making off as rapidly as possible toward the principal staircase. Greatly amazed, and showing his dismay in his countenance, he returned to the council-chamber, and reported that the library-door was half open, but that there was no one there.

In a house so strictly regulated as the Gesù, this incident of the general's door being half open during a conference involved all present in suspicion, even the general himself. A general search ensued; they rushed into the corridor, to the evident dismay of poor De Cambiac, whose disturbance was remarked as very suspicious. Next, the interior of the library was examined, but with no result; the corridor was empty. The rooms of the other fathers were explored; but all of them, with the exception of the members of the council, were found quietly occupied

with their studies. The lay brothers were next sent for, but the one in charge of the general's apartments—who had left the door open, as it happened, that morning—was not in the building.

At a time when it was necessary to be always on the alert, when the Roman National Assembly—the bitter enemy of the Jesuits—might devise at any moment some deadly plot, an incendiary design for instance, or a preparation of explosive bombs—the whole inhabitants of the Gesù were seized with an indescribable panic. The porter, on being questioned, had not noticed any thing out of the way. However, on being closely questioned as to whom he had admitted, he stated that no stranger had passed through the gate except the French priest, who had frequently been there before on a visit to Father de Cambiac, and who, by his special order, was allowed to go straight to his room as often as he came. He had been three hours with him that day. Whereupon the general summoned Father de Cambiac to tell him at what time the stranger had come to him, and when he left his apartment.

Father de Cambiac declared that he had never seen him the whole day. The porter was summoned again, and mentioned the exact hour at which the French priest had arrived and gone up the main staircase, for he had seen him with his own eyes, as well as the hour at which he had come down.

What a singular mystery! Could it be possible that Father de Cambiac was plotting against the order to which he belonged? His agitation on his return from the library to the council-chamber—the conviction present in every mind by the precision of the porter's declaration that the strange priest had been there that day, and that he had not been seen going out—the evident falsehood of Father de Cambiac, who must certainly have admitted him—all this complicated state of things threw the entire establishment into the utmost perplexity. And, as imagination is ever ready to run wild, even in Jesuit brains, the idea of a plot, with Father de Cambiac at its head—who, moreover, had betrayed himself to the council by his two ill-omened expressions of opinion which had so greatly scandalized them—acquired rapid growth. The panic was general, in the midst of which Passaglia's defection rose to the recollection of all.

Once more the secret council assembled. The equivocal conduct of Father de Cambiac was severely reprehended, as being altogether unprecedented in that place. They determined to send him to some one of their far-off establishments to do penance; and that at once. If the father were really guilty, and had betrayed any secret, his departure would arrest the plot. If he were innocent, still his submissive obedience would be a meritorious sacrifice before God.

Such was the summary justice of the secret council.

The next day Loubère ascertained that his friend had left Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

A SMALL MONSIGNOR.

LOUBÈRE felt pretty confident that he was in some way connected with Father de Cambiac's departure from Rome; but to avoid all suspicion he continued to officiate at the Gesù. He had a letter of introduction to the Abbé Bertrand, one of those French priests employed to communicate between Rome and the various bishops, and who conduct the business of several dioceses.

The vicar-general of Chambéry had, very obligingly, brought him under the notice of this official, from whom he received a most gracious welcome. Intimately acquainted as he was with all the peculiarities of the Roman prelates, he was calculated to be of considerable service to him in the object he had in view. He introduced him in every quarter; while Loubère, with his candid, straightforward disposition, soon succeeded in acquiring invaluable information bearing upon the execution of his scheme, with reference to which, be it observed, he maintained the strictest secrecy toward the Abbé Bertrand.

Among others, he chanced more particularly to meet a junior member of the Papal court, Monsignor Andrea Giusto, a private chamberlain of the Pope, who paid him considerable attention, appearing to be much struck by his simplicity and geniality, and cultivating his acquaintance with that wheedling obsequiousness which is the peculiar characteristic of the degenerate Romans. There could be little doubt that he was a man to be bought. His private reputation was none of the best; in fact, the inferior appointments at the Vatican are by no means carefully made. So it will be no matter of surprise to learn that on one of his visits to Loubère he opened his wide eyes with evident eagerness at the sight of a pile of gold pieces which our friend was amusing himself by counting on the table.

"This is the buona mano," said Loubère, "intended for the man who will help me in the rescue of an unlucky friend of mine."

"Which might easily be accomplished," replied the prelate, at once taking the bait.

"If you undertook it thoroughly, it might certainly be managed."

"Then I will, with all my heart. State the particulars."

"They are very simple—a mere piece of imprudence. A young priest, a most intimate friend of mine, has been silly enough to drop into the clutches of the Holy Office."

"Oh, oh! the Holy Office. A powerful institution that, signor."

"Nonsense. Do you mean to tell me that you fellows, attached to the Pope's person, can't do any thing you please? Come now, look at this money; handle it, if you like. Do what I ask, and it is yours."

The Italian cast a greedy look on the golden heap, so carefully piled up, and so bright-looking.

"Are you speaking seriously?" he asked.

"Most unquestionably I am."

"It is a grave matter, you see. I might ruin my future prospects....."

"You're too sharp for that. You know you all understand one another like pickpockets at a fair; you didn't begin yesterday to play the game 'scratch me and I'll scratch you.' What is it that you have to do, after all? Simply to gain over two or three members of the Holy Office. Perhaps one will be enough—a commissioner or an influential counselor. Just bring all your cunning into play; there's plenty of that article on hand here. If you find yourself driven to the most powerful argument, slip one of these coins into their hands. I brought them, I assure you, for that sole purpose. I don't intend taking a single one of them back to Savoy. Must I fling them into the Tiber?"

Fling them into the Tiber! The bare idea of it horrified monsignor.

"These French priests are a parcel of fools," he said to himself; "but they're as self-willed as mules. M. Loubère would be the last man to break his word."

"You sha'n't fling them into the Tiber," he rejoined.

"Very good, take as many of them as you want to begin with. You shall have the remainder when you give me back my friend."

"We must gain over a few more of the Vatican prelates."

"Be it so, then. I take you at your word. Will these four heaps be enough?"

And his avaricious acquaintance made a quiet calculation for a moment, with a face of such grave solemnity that it was all Loubère could do to refrain from laughing outright. He was endeavoring to reckon up the number of Roman crowns in the pile placed at his immediate disposal.

"To insure success, Sir," he replied, with a look of profound reflection—"in fact, to do the thing effectually, I think it would be as well to treble the amount. In that case I undertake the commission."

"By all means. Here are four more lots, making two-thirds of the sum I have set apart for the purpose."

"You understand that I consent to this agreement, and promise my co-operation in the matter you have at heart, because it is of so laudable a character; otherwise I would not touch this money, of which not a single coin will stay in my private pocket. Ah! signor abbate, it is so difficult, at present, to succeed in any enterprise at Rome. In days gone by, in the good old time, in the reign of Gregory XVI., all you had to do was to get hold of Gaetanino, who was once his barber, and became his most intimate confidant. The quarter of this money would have been enough, and more than enough, for the purpose. But that happy state of things has passed away. It is hard enough even to please the Pope, who is very strict; and as to getting a favor out of him

that is harder still. Probably, too, you wouldn't like to leave Rome without being made a knight of some one of the Papal orders? That's not difficult—merely a matter of a few scudi."

"I've no great longing in that direction, believe me."

"That I could certainly manage for you. Look here! I could even get you the Order of St. Gregory the Great or the Golden Spur. Which would you like?"

"We'll settle that by-and-by, if I have any money over that I don't know how to get rid of in any other way."

"Yet it's a sort of thing that's thought a good deal of by the French clergy."

"Oh, as for me, I'm settled for life, and have been long ago."

At this stage of the conversation monsignor, who was itching with impatient eagerness to clutch the gold—stretched out his long bony hands toward the sum allotted to him, lying on the table near Loubère. Then, stealthily grasping it, he slipped it slowly into his pocket, made a low obeisance, and withdrew.

"I shall soon hear from you?" said Loubère.

"On the earliest possible day, signor abbate."

CHAPTER VIII.

CARDINAL ANTONELLI.

CARDINAL ANTONELLI has been greatly calumniated in Europe. He is the flower of the Sacred College; a thorough Parisian, polished in his manners, appearing as a young man still, a character which suits him well. As he enters the Vatican, to have his customary audience, in his fashionable attire, rather tight-fitting round the waist like a cavalry officer's, it is easy to see that there is probably a great destiny in store for him. In this guise he shows himself as prime minister, but without an atom of pride. He is a pleasant man to talk to—though he has a habit of concealing his real thoughts under the veil of elaborate diplomatic phraseology, expressed, be it told to his credit, in the very best French. In his bearing he is courteous in the extreme. As you quit his presence, it is difficult to realize that you have been speaking to the chief of an obstinate reactionary Government. You rub your eyes, to make sure that you are positively in the Vatican, and not in the audience room of the minister of a free constitutional kingdom. We may add in his praise, that he would be as zealous a public servant to a State in advanced liberalism.

He is one of those men that surrender their services to a political system with all the faithfulness they would exhibit in attaching themselves to the cause of a friend. His defense of the temporal power is offered in the most thorough good faith, and with a chivalrous grace and disinterestedness well calculated to disarm his bitterest opponents. He is the superintendent of a wealthy house, all whose private feel-

ings and aims are absorbed in the desire for its aggrandizement. The "non-possumus" is an utterance in which he intensely believes. Yet, clever as he is, he is not a genius. As to what is passing in the religious world he is as ignorant as an old woman. The religious press of Paris is everlastingly startling his propriety, and hardening him in his antagonistic policy, as it has the Pope, the cardinals, a great majority of the bishops, ditto of the priests, as well as a considerable section of serious laics. He is undoubtedly a good man, and his real creed is right; yet for the moment he will swear, immovably, by the Gospel according to Veuillot, as it is expounded to him day after day, with amazing precision and rare polemical suavity, by illustrious doctors, among the ablest of whom we may mention Coquille and Taconnet.

Fortified by their teaching, he is firmly convinced that his resolute opposition to any attack on the tiara is an effectual checkmate to European diplomacy. His "No," he thinks, will be the admiration of posterity; while the glory of Antonelli, the cardinal minister, will shine through ages yet unborn.

But this in no way interferes with the fact that he has managed to make hay while the sun shines, in sage anticipation of possible rain. A few fair millions will secure him an easy competence, no matter where, and leave him free from all self-reproach as to his present management of his share of the revenues of the purple.

Such is a sketch of the man with whom France negotiates in all matters relating to international politics.

Julio's imprisonment had created a great stir. One of the principal and best-informed Brussels journals had given a full account of the extraordinary kidnapping of his sister, the romantic story of the convent burglary, with the melancholy wind-up of the drama in the dungeons of the Holy Office.

So Louise found ready sympathy on her arrival at Paris. Her beauty, youth, and misfortunes pleaded eloquently with many a gray-headed official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She found no difficulty even in securing the ardent sympathy of the Minister himself. Indeed interest in the captive was aroused in the highest quarters. The French ambassador received a diplomatic note enjoining him to leave no stone unturned to effect the abbé's deliverance.

Thus instructed, he lost no time in sounding Cardinal Antonelli. He enlarged on the sympathy which was felt for the prisoner in France; of the influential protection which had been extended to his sister at Paris; and of the good effect which his release would accomplish. In short, the wording of the application was a triumph of diplomatic skill.

The cardinal heard him through.

"It is simply impossible, M. l'Envoyé," he replied, "simply impossible. You seem to forget that of all Roman Orders, the one involved in the present case admits of no dicta-

tion—no, not from a minister like me, an ambassador like you, an emperor like your august master, nor even from his Holiness himself. We have no desire to alter this state of things, least of all to make a change in the Holy Office. *Nihil inmovandum*. On the return of the Pope from Gaeta two courses were open—either to introduce a thorough revolution, or to resume quietly the old régime. The latter appeared to be the more logical, and so it was adopted. Hence our absolute adherence to precedent. Between ourselves, the holy Inquisition, coextensive with Catholicism itself, denounces modern civilization. Yet it is a main support of the ecclesiastical arch—upset it, and the result is a general overthrow. We must not forget that we are in a kingdom of priests. Any crime affecting religious interests ought necessarily to meet with condign punishment at our hands. The Holy Office terrifies—nothing more. Its bark is worse than its bite.”

“And yet, your eminence, it can lay hold of victims, and that for no great faults either.”

“No great faults! Do you call it nothing to violate a cloister? Do you make so little of such an audacious sacrilege in a consecrated building?”

“It was committed in behalf of his sister, and to accomplish her rescue from Forcassi, where she had been kept against her will.”

“Then he should have appealed to the civil powers.”

“And do you think he would have succeeded in that way, your eminence?”

“Possibly. I admit, however,” he added, with a smile, “that he would have had to wait a little.”

“Then don’t blame him for having adopted a more expeditious course—even granting that it is illegal.”

“I don’t blame him at all, I assure you. I understand his motive and feeling perfectly. But the Holy Office doesn’t. And if you destroy the terrors which it inspires, do you imagine that our thousands of religious houses scattered over Italy would be safe for a moment? Banditti, who have no respect for the best guarded, wealthy mansion, shrink from entering the convent gate. To cross that threshold is the very worst profanation; and the Inquisition, with the dismay it creates wherever it is named, exercises a protecting power which no laws could extend. The idea of rotting in its cells, of being damned here and hereafter, stops the ruffian, shields the convent, and is a perpetual safeguard against every description of sacrilege. We would do any thing else your Government might ask; but this we can not do. The restoration of the little Mortara was much simpler, and yet, to accomplish that, it was necessary to stultify the proceedings of our civil and religious legislature—a thing which a government is always averse to doing.”

The ambassador saw that it was useless to press the matter further.

Meanwhile a communication from Louise,

dated Paris, informed Loubère of the great success she had had, and of the aid which had been promised her through the French representative at the Papal court.

He made vain efforts to see Julio, that he might, at least, give him his sister’s letter. Strict orders—issued more strictly in this special case—forbade any admissions to the cell.

He next went in quest of the prelate, who had not turned up in any way since his disappearance with the gold. At first Loubère was very patient. However, as the time slipped by without any sign of matters being in train in that quarter, he determined to pay him a visit. He was received almost haughtily, and greeted with “We shall see. I’m very sanguine;” and at every subsequent interview the answer was the same.

“Nice, that,” thought he to himself, “I’m fleeced. I see the golden key can’t open every door in Rome. Oh, my fine chap, I’ll make you smart for this!”

He resolved on taking more energetic measures. One fine morning, when every body else was fast asleep in bed, he knocked at the prelate’s door, and told the concierge that he must see him on urgent business.

She got up in a hurry, put on her dressing-gown, and admitted him forthwith.

“So, so,” said the stout Pyrenean, in a tone of voice that had a strange significance—“it’s time we settled this affair. Either you set to work in earnest, or return my money, Monsignor de Giusto. Do you understand me?”

The poor wretch, little used to this peremptory style, trembled as he stood before him.

“He abuses his position,” he said to himself. “Ah, if it were not for that vile army of occupation, wouldn’t I pop him into a dungeon alongside of his friend! But it is a dangerous thing to lay hands on a Frenchman. It is necessary to have a proved offense, as in the case of the Abbé Julio.”

“M. l’Abbé,” he said, in a whining tone, “I have done my utmost, I assure you. If you only knew the pains I have taken, the efforts I have made in your behalf! Stay, I’ll give you a proof of my zeal. I am in a position, by means of your money—understand me clearly—to repeat to you all that passed between Cardinal Antonelli and the French ambassador on this subject.”

And he detailed the whole conversation recorded above.

Loubère calmed down. It is true that Pyreneans are hasty, but they are also very generous. The wretched prelate was more dead than alive. However, he joyfully marked the alteration in the other’s tone and manner.

“Good Heavens! that’s dreadful. And you think there is no other prospect of success?”

“Only to intercede with the Pope, which I mean to do, I assure you, with all possible dispatch; but give me a little time.”

“Very good. I will be back in a week.”

And as he retraced his steps, in a despondent

frame of mind, the idea occurred to him that he would visit the scene of Julio's exploit, which Louise had so touchingly described to him.

"I'll set off for Forcassi," he said to himself. "That will compel me to leave this man in peace for a time."

The next day he buried himself in a corner of the Viterba diligence, and in due course arrived at Vetralla.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SMUGGLER.

LOUBÈRE devoted a whole hour to our Lady of Forcassi. He saw the black statue, the wardrobe, the pictures, the carved cloister rail, which had been restored with as little delay as possible, and which, in spite of the careful effort of the artist to make the new wood-work as like the old as he could, showed very plainly where the breakage had been effected.

He was greatly interested in every thing around him; and pictured his friend grasping the venerable grating, and crying out in his excitement, "My sister! my sister! Give me my sister!"

It fell in with his arrangements to occupy the week's grace he had given Giusto in visiting the neighborhood of the Lake of Bolsena, and the large Etruscan towns between Viterba and Corneto, returning to Rome by the Civita Vecchia railway. On quitting Forcassi he resolved to go and pay Jacomo a visit.

Louise had so thoroughly described the brave man's abode that he had very little difficulty in finding out the small white house. The smuggler was at home. They were soon intimate; for nothing develops intimacy like community of interest and warm attachment to the same friend.

"Jacomo, you are a courageous fellow: I feel as grateful for your conduct as if you had saved my life instead of that charming girl's."

"And how about her poor brother?"

"Ah!—you know where he is?"

"In the devil's clutches."

"Worse than that: you can come round the devil by selling yourself to him."

And Loubère described the efforts which had been already made, and their utter failure.

Jacomo looked very grave.

"So the ambassador of the Emperor of the French has been to the Pope, and failed."

"Yes."

"H'm!—looks bad, that. Yet but for the French the Pope would have to pack up his tiara."

"Exactly so. Only he doesn't care to overrate the service in our eyes. My small prelate, too, has had no better success than the ambassador."

"I see. Kept your gold, though—hasn't he?"

"I should think so."

"If I only had a quarter of the sum....."

"Don't speak of it. Here's plenty more."

And producing a roll of twenty-franc pieces, he tore off the paper, and turned out on the smuggler's table gold coins to the amount of one thousand francs. Such a heap had never been in that house before.

"Take back your money," said Jacomo; "I have been well paid already by the young lady, while I feel I have only done half my work. We must rescue her brother."

"Any way of effecting that?"

"We can only try; Jacomo is not fond of boasting. But since his excellency the French ambassador has failed it is high time I interfered, as it is out of the question to leave the poor dear fellow in that vile hole. I only saw him for a few hours, but I can't tell you how I was taken with him; why, I love him like my own child. He shall be out before another week; only I can't act alone: so you must give me your sympathy and help. Here, take up that gold, we shall want it at Rome. Good-by, wife. Pray the Holy Virgin to bless our enterprise; it is full of peril, but it is very glorious."

Loubère and Jacomo set out for Civita Vecchia. The same night they reached Rome.

CHAPTER X.

PIUS IX. AND THE OUTBREAK AT ROME.

VERY prominent is the position occupied by Pius IX. in the religious history of the present day. It will be the singular fortune of Mastai to have entered on his pontificate amidst the shouts of liberals and the anathemas of the clerical faction, and to leave it with this two-fold expression of sentiment exactly reversed. The very men who are shouting at this moment, "Long live the Pope-King, the immortal Pius IX.!" are the same that in 1847 declared that "the choice of Mastai was the worst that could have been made—that he was a revolutionary Pope."

The question arises, how is this change of sentiment to be explained? Was Mastai an absolutist in liberal clothing, or is he now a liberal in absolutist clothing—a mere truckler to the pardonable desire to live at peace with his cardinals and bishops, so completely steeped in ultramontanist? Nothing of the sort. The truth is, he is naturally a moderate man; but, alarmed at the slippery paths along which royal reformers are being drawn in their pursuit of liberty, he is taking refuge in the temporary shelter of opposition—like a mariner huddled up under a rock, but whom the swell, as it rolls by, will soon whirl out into the midst of the breakers.

Pius IX. has had the fate of Louis XVI., without the scaffold. Like him, a man of good intention, distressed at the evils engendered by the previous reign, it was not surprising that he should introduce a system of government calculated, in some measure, to do away with them. He found affairs in such utter confusion that

the authorities could not even furnish him with a list, much less with particulars, of the prisoners in the Roman dungeons. So, in order to clear out these Augean stables effectually, he had to publish a general amnesty, embracing alike bandits, assassins, and political offenders.

A characteristic incident in the opening measures of his reign was his administering the blessed sacrament with his own hands to all these victims of the old *régime*, to the great horror of the Jesuits and cardinals.

Beyond all doubt he is very superior to those around him. It is difficult to imagine the want of mental vigor in that Roman prelacy which forms what Italians call the Curia. It could not but happen that generation after generation, brought up in studies strictly limited to a certain modicum of theology, must eventually of necessity reach the lowest depths of intellectual degradation.

Under the tight rein of the blameless occupant of the chair of St. Peter the traditional laxity of the Roman prelates has become less conspicuous. Up to the time of the arrival of the army of occupation these illustrious dignitaries were the heroes of endless flirtations. But on the appearance of the epaulets monsignor was quietly put aside; the military lover superseded the ecclesiastical, who was driven into ignominious retirement by the more lucky conquering heroes.

Whatever be the prospects of the Papacy a few years hence—whether some diplomatic compromise is effected, involving no leading question, but postponing the final adjustment to a future day, like worn-out clothes clung to with affectionate pertinacity till they are unable to hold together—or whether the prayer of Italy will be heard, and Rome given her for a capital—this grand issue, which fifteen years ago we little thought to be so near, is actually an accomplished fact. Pius IX. is king only by the grace of Napoleon's legions, and illustrates in his own person the absurdity of the notion that the spiritual power can not exist without the temporal—a notion which, though it is not asserted as a dogma by the cardinals and bishops, is so put forth as that the opposite creed is condemned as heresy. Yet here we have had a Pope for fourteen years exercising his full spiritual rights, decreeing doctrines, holding consistories, issuing encyclical letters; yet maintained in his political position all the while by an army of occupation, on whose good pleasure his honorary kingship depends; this vassalage, however, in no way impairing his other rule.

So the experiment has been tried; and should Victor Emanuel once come to the Quirinal, no matter what the form of government at Rome, the spiritual ascendancy of the Pope would remain the same.

The tardiness of the French Emperor in settling a question which he alone has it in his power to adjust has long irritated the political world. His delay has weakened his popularity; yet, though he knows this, he has not hastened

his measures, probably from an appreciation of the full force of the "*Deus ex machinâ*" rule. Dilatory because he sees the full value of delay, as much in the interests of his own government as for the purpose of realizing gradually a crisis which, were it to be consummated at a blow, would prove too overwhelming—his hesitation is prudent. All great events in the world's history have been thus brought about.

When an old oak branch, dried up by long winters, after having been for some time stripped of its foliage and bark, and invaded by myriads of insects, is attacked by the winds, it does not fall at once: first comes a last decay, a last giving way, ere the storm gathers its forces from the horizon and stretches it on the plain.

Just so will it be with the temporal power. Napoleon III. will spare it the humiliation of a sudden crash. No scaffold, prison, or exile for the Pope. There will come a day when Pius IX., or his successor, will find that his tiara has lost two of its circlets, that the Pontifical rim alone remains. Such is the issue which the great arbiter of the Roman future has called the "solution of Providence."

Till this final day, of which few take note, the Papacy will prolong an obnoxious and wearisome existence during the long interval of an intermediate regimen, designed to accustom it by degrees to the coming change. Nothing is more common than for a visitor at Rome to see the Pope at some public ceremony, or possibly at a church, hospital, or convent, weeping bitterly. The last of the priest-kings seems to feel all the burdensomeness of the stately solitude that girds a crowned head, whether that crown be hereditary or elective.

Loubère, though by no means given to tears, as a rule, was deeply affected on seeing the Pope, one day, coming out of the Church of the Trinità del Monte, and getting into his carriage. A few mounted riflemen in faded and tattered blue uniforms were in front. The carriage itself was neither simple, as might suit the profession of a Christian priest, nor yet gorgeous and grand, like that of a mighty monarch. Loubère felt deeply these marks of evident decay. "Poor king!" he thought, as he looked at the spectacle.

But when the form of the victim of the priesthood appeared at the church-door, with the gentle, loving eyes—the eyelids red with weeping and still dropping tears—the hand raised in serene though sorrowful majesty, to bless the few who happened to be gathered round—the unpolished Pyrenean instinctively fell on his knees to receive the benediction from the all but broken-hearted potentate.

Some fellows were staring with a passionless expression while this touching scene was being presented. Of little account to them was the blessing of a weeping sovereign. They knelt because they had been accustomed to do so, and rose laughing.

"Vulgar wretches!" he muttered, almost aloud. "And yet," he went on to reflect, "this royalty is virtually lifeless. All they see

is the carriage and riflemen. They are silent to the king. But when, from the balcony of St. Peter's, the Pope, with his sweet ringing voice, makes the "Benedicat vos" distinctly audible among the masses beneath, these very men would bow lower than I should. There they recognize the vicar of Christ; while here their icy nonchalance is due to the difference in the element presented."

There was a good reason for the Pope's emotion that day. He had heard from his secret police that a great national demonstration was to take place the next morning at the instigation of the National Committee; that that time would probably be the last in which he would be able to call himself a crowned king—a dignity which he valued little for himself, but which he felt it incumbent upon him to hand down to his successors.

Disturbances in Rome are unlike disturbances any where else, such as the present age has multiplied before us. They bear the mild designation of manifestations. At Paris, the gun and bayonet are in full force; at Rome, things are managed in a very different manner. Its movements are strictly prudent, and in submission to the authority of the Committee. Should they find it necessary or expedient to rouse the popular sentiment and sound the views of the Pontifical Government on any pressing question; or, again, to ascertain the attitude the French general is likely to take in certain contingencies, the note is given, "To the Corso!" which means, "After the gens d'armes; use your blades with prudence; cry, 'Down with the Pope!' but don't go any further. The hour for the final blow is not yet."

The outbreak of the 2d February, 1861, will not soon be forgotten. The great anxiety then was to know what might be France's intention: it was notorious that the French ambassador was favorable to Italian unity.

"We are very weak and inactive," said one of the most ardent members of the Committee. "We seem to be expecting our partridges to fall down roasted from the trees. The policy of the Emperor is to affect to protect the Pope; but if we were to overpower our Government, after a few French shots fired for the look of the thing, we should be left to ourselves, and the longing of years would be accomplished."

This wise counsel had been followed. The plan was—to study the attitude of the general in command of the troops; to see if, in case of a revolution, he would take a course decidedly hostile to the national party, or whether he would yield to gentle pressure, and leave the Romans to their own devices.

Jacomo was two days' journey from Rome at the time that this storm was brewing. To judge by appearances, a revolution was close at hand: such, at least, was the upshot of the secret report presented to the Pope.

Loubère seeing the city in its repose dreamed little of coming disturbance. A Roman who knew all that was going to happen, who was to

act a conspicuous part in the approaching manifestation, and with whom he had spent two hours that morning, never breathed a word of it.

They met on the Place d'Espagne.

"Any news?" he asked Loubère.

"No," was the reply, "except that I have just seen the Pope cry."

"And well he may."

Loubère did not understand him; the reader will guess at once who he was.

Jacomo, an old soldier of Garibaldi, a smuggler with a strong sinewy arm, and steadfast anti-papal heart, was too valuable to be overlooked. An agent of the Committee met him.

"Jacomo, we shall want you to-morrow."

"Very well, signor."

He had first received a few paolis to drink to the downfall of the Pope-King, and then his commission, with the quiet ease of a man who was always ready.

"Now attend," resumed Jacomo; "I am thoroughly at your service; but I must have some men at my disposal to break open the Inquisition cells, and let out a brave friend or two, to swell our hosts."

"As far as that goes it will be a capital diversion."

To avoid suspicion and to secure to himself the power to go about the town without danger, canvassing his friends, and feeling generally the popular pulse, the agent of the Committee went to the police to tell them that a blow was about to be struck.

"We know that," was the reply.

"I heard something about an intended attack on the prisons."

"Thank you; much obliged."

This little farce played, the agent might safely proclaim his wishes under the whole heaven, without the Pontifical spies ever dreaming of watching his proceedings. No fear from a man who had put the government on its guard.

On the 2d of February, exactly at the hour named by the Committee, a compact body of men, dressed in the old national style, took up their position in the Campo Vaccino, the approaches to the Coliseum, the Place Navone, the Corso, the Place del Popolo, and every other quarter of general concourse.

The police on this side had made various arrangements for a probable fight. Often intimate friends are arrayed on opposite sides in these struggles, and the singular interchange may be heard of one, in perfect good humor, crying out to the other, as though he were referring to some engagement connected with a pleasure party—

"We shall meet to-morrow;" and receiving for answer,

"Yes, I am going to put an edge on my sword."



CHAPTER XI.

ROMAN BEGGARS.

"WHERE are you going, Pietro?"

"To the Corso; there's something up."

"And what have you got to do with it, you fool?"

"I—why I'm a patriot; I've only rags to show; but I fancy I'm a Roman for all that."

"Well, what next?"

"What next? I am going to hear what my betters have got to say. They are sick of being priest-ridden, and want to get rid of monsignori. Every one in his place; priests in churches, men of the world in the government offices."

"What a jolly yarn, my boy! I never heard any thing of the kind in my day; but I don't understand it, so speak out. You want to kick out Pope, monks, and priests; is that it?"

"Not in the least, governor."

"Why, can't you see that that's what they're pushing at?"

"No, because it ain't."

"Get along with your madonna mia; why, you are soft, Pietro. You are working your own destruction, and of those belonging to you, and leaving your father in his old age."

"I don't see it.....for these....."

"Yes, you are; you'll go and shout, 'Long live the Pope!'"

"No, I won't!"

"Poor fool! just listen here. Who is it that gives you your liberty, uncontrolled, and with all its blessings? Isn't it the Pope?"

"Well, I go in for a proper government; it would be more the sort of thing for the country."

"Do you? Don't you see that the real king of Rome is not the Pope but the beggar? You smile; but I repeat, the beggar, in his dirty, tattered, old gray coat. You and I are the true kings in this place, which clever chaps are funny enough to call the Eternal City. We rule in the public squares, in the streets, at the palace doors, in the church porch. We live there, sleep there, and enjoy that delicious liberty which nobles never find in their grand drawing-rooms. Where'll you get all this when a French police gets the upper hand here?"

"I only wish that French ways were all the go here!"

"You don't know what you're talking about; any one might see that you've never been in the fine French cities; no beggars are allowed there; a huge placard stuck on a post at the entrance of the town has this pleasant inscription—'Beggings is forbidden.'"

"Is it? so much the better. That'll make young chaps work, and I've no doubt there are plenty of asylums for the old and infirm."

"My dear boy, your head is turned. Yes, there are asylums—prisons!"

"What a cram!"

"Yes, prisons; since, when once you get in there—and that's no easy matter—you never get out. It's good-by then to sun and air, and free access to places you used to haunt; to the

land of your birth, and where you played as a child. It's good-by to life, Signor Pietro, for liberty is life. To be free, without a good dinner to trust to, is better than to be caged up with regulation diet, and gratings in front of you, like wild-beast cages. At least, so say I."

"Say it and welcome, then—good-by."

"Stop; one word more."

"Well?"

"You are getting to like work, are you?"

"Not I; but I'll put up with it; it's better than to be always stretching out your hand, and filling your porringer with convent soup."

"What a notion! What's there humiliating in that? Aren't monks beggars as much as we? Don't they go about to houses asking alms? Why, these monks elevate us. In stooping to our ways they raise us to their level, and many a monk has been a Pope. Beggings in them has reached the chair of St. Peter. And that's something to brag of."

"Thank ye, for the honor. What I find is, that a workman is respected, and a beggar despised. Do these begging monks you talk of find a very warm greeting? Why, they only get what they ask, as a matter of course, often because people can't help giving, because they don't like to be marked out for abuse. I know that, I do."

"You'll break your father's heart, if you keep in your present mind."

"Don't take on in that way, I'll support you when I'm a man. Good-by; wait patiently. See this blade—sharp, isn't it? The Pope's guard had better look to themselves."

"Oh, you wretched boy! but, Pietro, listen once more."

"What is it, father? I'm in a hurry."

"You've some reason you haven't told me for going and mixing yourself up with that row, where there's nothing for our sort to get but blows. Come, my lad, make a clean breast of it to your father."

"Well, then, if you must know, I'm in love with Marino, the sculptor's daughter."

"Then marry her."

"She wouldn't marry a beggar."

"But you're rich; richer than her father. I get more by begging than he does by making images, which he can't make any one buy. I have a few golden crowns put by, which I'll give you, if you'll only keep on in the old way."

"Not I; I'd rather work with Giulietta's father. I am going to learn his trade, but in the mean time I'll have a dash in for national independence. Hurrah for united Italy!"

"Then go, and be blown to you!"

CHAPTER XII.

A REAL SIEGE.

WHILE the demonstration set on foot by the National Committee was throwing Rome into the greatest possible excitement, making the

Papal troops collect in the public places, while detachments of them occupied the entrance to the principal streets—the army of occupation, called out by the commander-in-chief, arrived with a promptitude and good order unknown to the other force, and interposed between the Pope's soldiers as they rushed wildly to the rescue and the excited people who were making the air ring with their patriotic shouts. It took some time to effect this movement, but when accomplished it was thoroughly successful. The imperial force marched leisurely up; officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates requested the Romans, with genuine French politeness, to spare them the trouble of using their bayonets. The disorganized multitude, which, as usual, had greatly exaggerated its strength, gradually retreated. The Pontifical gens d'armes arrested some of the more stubborn. The fact was, they had overestimated French moderation, and made no secret of their disgust at finding out their mistake. The patriots, for their part, had been driven to despair by being unable to make a single prisoner; so that there was a tragic and comic element combined in the affair. The National Committee had been informed that the French army had received very stringent orders as to the severity of the measures they might be called upon to adopt; that these would be merely formal if the hubbub were suppressed, but that in the event of a revolution being attempted they would be executed without the slightest mercy.

All this was happening at the principal spot where the eager masses had collected. A row is a perfect treat to some; costly, perhaps, but that's not much thought of when each man is called upon to take part in it himself.

The French troops had extended their line and taken up a position in formidable array, from the Place del Popolo to the Coliseum; thus occupying the great central thoroughfare, and commanding, as a matter of course, the *champ de bataille*.

Every possible contingency in the more deserted parts had been fully anticipated and provided for. However, the police had orders to double the prison guard.

Jacomo, being a skillful hand at manœuvring, had formed his plans. As the men, whom he applied for, reached the prescribed place, he took them aside into an empty room, gave them copious draughts of wine, at Loubère's expense; and, as soon as his little army, of thirty strong, had reached the necessary pitch of enthusiasm, he provided them with arms, and then, placing himself at their head, led them to the prison of the Inquisition.

The first engagement was terrible. The police, warned of what was intended, had placed the double guard in ambush. A few fell on either side at the first fire; but the enthusiasm of Jacomo's troop carried them on. Moreover, they had been well plied with drink. As soon, however, as they discovered their enemy's vast strength their courage failed. The first door had been broken in. Meanwhile, Jacomo's men

sprang upon the guard with such force that the officer in command retreated behind the second door, thinking to spare himself and his men needless bloodshed, when, suddenly, a troop of the French army appeared round the corner of the long street in front of the jail. Jacomo, all the while, was ready for the reverse, and made a sign to the others, who fled away by several winding streets unknown to the French; so that the great majority escaped being made prisoners.

Jacomo, covered with blood and powder, concealed himself for a few days. As soon, however, as he felt it to be safe, he sallied forth in search of Loubère.

"You can't think what a terrible state I have been in about you," said the abbé. "I came to the conclusion that the gens d'armes had got hold of you, and went to ascertain whether it was so or not. I knew a terrible struggle had taken place at the Inquisition, and jumped at once to the conclusion that you had been killed. I was almost tempted to curse Providence for having taken away another of Julio's best friends. But here you are, after all, alive and well. Thank God, I find you so. I am full of hope for the future."

"It's these wretched countrymen of yours that have spoiled every thing. What a splendid expedition it was! I shall be proud of it as long as I live. How I did head it! A general couldn't have managed a hundred men better. But what do you want now? There's nothing more to be done—"

"Nothing more, Jacomo! Why, we haven't tried every plan within our reach. You are not done for yet."

"I done for!—oh no. I have still blood left in my veins and ideas in my head. Have you any more gold left?"

"Not much."

"We must risk every thing we have. Come—it won't do to be down-hearted—we must pluck up our spirits. I'll contrive something."

"Bravo, Jacomo, you're a splendid fellow."

CHAPTER XIII.

OSTERIA DELLA SABINA.

It was the 10th of October, 1861. Three stout, strong men, with a resolute, military air, in the dress of Roman peasants, were devouring, by the pale light of a lamp, an oleaginous and inodorous repast. The place was Osteria della Sabina, an inn patronized by priests on their way to Rome, by smugglers and professional beggars, and suspected characters ready for any work that might turn up. The mean-looking house had only one door opening into an irregular space on the left bank of the Tiber, near that gem of miniature architecture, the Temple of Vesta. The ground-floor consisted of a large dark room reeking with smoke, a few adjoining apartments, a kitchen and cellars. Up stairs were twelve repulsive-looking bedrooms, separated by a gloomy, filthy corridor. At certain

times, when the house was thronged with a large influx of peasants from the mountains, these rooms assumed the appearance of human ant-hills. Ten or twelve men would sleep huddled up together on straw palliasses and mattresses; two wretched beds, the curtains of which were of the remotest date, forming the only furniture on the spot. The landlady was Signora Giustina, an old woman with immense hips, a square head, and large, but fine features, shriveled up by age, hard work, and severe privations. She had only one son, whom she had enlisted in the national army. On the day that the city was taken he was brought home—a corpse.

Her house was perfectly safe. Inside its walls you might say any thing you pleased. Conspiracies against the Papal Government, abductions, highway robberies, and outrages of every description were concocted at her long table. Giustina was a sort of mother to her very questionable guests. Had she once betrayed her trust her inn would have been forsaken. She was on the best of terms with the police, whom she secretly bribed with a small annual offering, which she dignified as “buona mano,” and which the agents shared among themselves. She was also very liberal to the Capuchins and other beggars. She had a Madonna in a recess, at one of the corners of her house, which she dressed with lavish splendor, and before which there was always to be seen a lighted lamp. Moreover, she never failed to keep Easter with all due observance.

“Very good,” said one of the three alluded to above, and who appeared to be a sort of captain over the others, “you are not the sort of men to draw back.”

“Not we, signor.”

“Here are five hundred scudi.”

“Agreed.”

“Remember, it’s a dangerous undertaking.”

“Who cares?”

“We shall have to climb a high wall.”

“We could climb the lower regions, if that’s all.”

“And perhaps be shot at.”

“Used to that.”

“Then it’s all settled.”

“Most certainly. We’re men, and that’s enough.”

“Then I’ll be ready for you in a minute. I shall bring a rope-ladder and revolver with plenty of barrels for each of us. If they attack us, no matter whence it comes, fire and kill as many as you can. It’s a rescue we’re after; and four horses will wait. We’re not going, mind, to the end of the world. We shall have to travel all night to cross Subiaco, and set down our charge on the other side of the frontier—at Rocca-San-Stephano, beyond the reach of the sbirri. But then think of the five hundred scudi. You’ll get them here to-morrow, at this hour. I’ll leave them with Signora Giustina, for the purpose. Come on.”

And dashing down the scudi on the table he arranged them in five heaps, and handed them over to the care of the landlady.

“Here, lock them up for us till to-morrow

evening, and have a good supper ready at that time.”

The eyes of the two men shone with unnatural lustre under their dark eyebrows. They went to have a few hours’ sleep, enjoining Giustina to wake them at a given hour.

About half past twelve they reached a quiet street at the extremity of one of the most deserted districts of Rome. It was a terrible night. The rain was deluging the Eternal City, and a furious east wind was blowing. The men, wrapping their cloaks round them, walked on some way without speaking, and then paused under a long wall of great height. Their leader took a small lantern, rendered necessary by the almost impenetrable darkness, and unrolled a rope-ladder, the end of which he flung on the top of the wall, where it hooked itself firmly. In a moment he was up, followed by one of the others. Once safe on the other side he made for a certain door, feeling his way with his hands in preference to using his dark lantern. Reaching the spot in question, a low massive doorway, he drew a bundle of keys from his waist and tried the lock.

But there was some hitch, as the key got twisted inside and wouldn’t turn. A full minute was consumed in pulling it out before another could be tried, which was not done without shaking the door and making some noise; then more were experimented upon, but to no purpose. At length a skeleton key did the business, the bolt flew back with an unavoidable noise. The heavy door groaned on its hinges. The prisoner, who had awoke from a deep sleep at the first sound of disturbance, sprang to his feet.

“Follow me,” said Jacomo; “you are free. You have only to come with me to the wall, where you’ll find a rope-ladder. There is a man waiting in the street. But not a syllable, for God’s sake.”

Julio left his cell, grasping his deliverer’s hand. Soon he reached the place, and scaled the wall, followed by the man. As soon as Jacomo was satisfied that the two were safely over, he prepared to climb up after them. He had hardly mounted a few feet, however, when he heard a terrible shout, and felt an iron hand grasping him round the ankles. It was the jailer, who was raising frantic shouts for help. The sentry hearing the outcry, rang an alarm-bell, and the soldiers, who had been asleep in the guard-room, turned out in a moment, with lighted torches. In the mean time two men were struggling in the darkness. Jacomo had seized the jailer by the throat, and all but strangled him, when the man drew a poniard from his waist, and stretched the brave fellow a corpse at his feet.

At that moment the guard came up. By the light of their torches the jailer recognized in the pale features of the dead Jacomo his neighbor at Vetralla.

As for Julio, pushed up by a strong hand, he fell, more dead than alive, at the bottom of the wall, on the other side.

PART VII.

THE GRAND STAGE AND THE GRAND STRUGGLE.

CHAPTER I.

LOUISE AT PARIS.

THE escape of Louise from the delightful retreat of the Benedictine ladies of Notre Dame di Forcassi had greatly astonished the Jesuits. Who would have thought that any one could have found her out in that sweet seclusion, with smugglers and bandits blossoming in all the country round? How in the world did the Abbé Denis manage to miss his man? How came it that he didn't arrest him, with the delegate's help, on his appearance at Viterba, it being more than possible that he had obtained possession of the secret of her whereabouts? Nothing more ordinary or simple than such a proceeding; nothing easier in a country where the liberty of the subject is a thing unknown.

The Jesuits were beside themselves with rage, fully realizing the serious consequences which might result to the order from the spreading of the tidings through Europe that they had perpetrated an act of kidnapping; more especially, too, at a time when the French tribunals were making discoveries in reference to similar occurrences, not greatly to the credit of the regular clergy.

What they naturally dreaded most was a description from the lips of Mademoiselle de la Clavière herself, in circles peculiarly hostile to their order, of the indignity and injustice to which she had been subjected. The Liberal journals—ever hankering after such details, so compromising to the fathers, who for years and years had been most careful not to commit themselves, though the ground were burning under their feet—would infallibly get hold of this thrilling little romance, scarcely credible in the middle of the nineteenth century, and serve it up as a tempting dish to their thousand readers. Here was a real danger, and one to be taken into consideration.

On the day that Louise had parted from Loubère on her way to Paris, she was not a little astonished to meet a stranger at Lyons, at the hotel where she alighted, who informed her that he wished to speak to her for a moment on a subject of the most pressing importance.

Louise's first thoughts flew to her brother; perhaps this might be some messenger from him, bringing even, though she dared not allow herself to hope it, news of his escape. She asked the man in.

"I wish to be candid with you, mademoiselle," he said; "I am sent by the Jesuits. I do not,

however, come to you with any hostile purpose. On the contrary, my mission is peaceable."

"Go on, sir."

"In the first place, let me ask you whether you suppose for an instant that the Jesuits are ignorant of the rash conduct of the countess . . ."

"I know nothing about it."

"Then I can assure you, on my word of honor, and in the name of the order, that they knew nothing of the affair till a week after you had left St. Aventin."

"Possibly not. But why come and tell me that?"

"For this reason: at present it is of the highest importance, if we would avoid any farther scandals—and surely we've had enough of them already—that a veil should be thrown over the past. The Jesuits are powerful, and it is not easy to get hold of them. To create a disturbance would lead to no very palpable result. In all probability, mademoiselle, you are incapable of vengeance; you are a Christian to whom it would be needless to preach forgiveness of injuries; and if you have been injured by the Jesuits, I call God to witness that it has been quite involuntarily. So I came to propose an amicable arrangement: That you should quietly retire into any small town you choose—in the country, if you like (that would be preferable)—and there maintain a strict silence on every thing that has transpired. The Jesuits are not so hard to deal with as you may imagine; they promise you a thousand francs a year, in addition to your aunt's legacy."

"Have you any thing more to say?"

"Yes; I forgot the most important point. The Jesuits, who are omnipotent at Rome, engage to procure your brother's release on condition that he enters a monastery for the remainder of his life."

"I can not accept any engagement in my brother's behalf," said Louise; "but as far as I myself am concerned, I want nothing, and will receive nothing from the Jesuits. I would rather die than be under any obligation to those who have robbed me of my property and personal freedom. As for the countess, she was my mother's friend, so she may rely upon my secrecy as far as the mention of her name is concerned."

"Beware, mademoiselle; you will regret, one day, that you did not accept this proffered intervention in your brother's behalf."

"I leave his case in the hands of God. You may go, sir," in a tone indicating her will that the interview should be closed.

Denis (for he it was) withdrew. He was returning from Italy, charged by the general of the order to discover Louise in her retreat at Lans-le-bourg.

Meanwhile Louise herself, who was beginning to get accustomed to the Jesuit style of doing things, observed that he watched her incessantly. The day that she started for Paris he was at the station and in the train, though he had not impudence enough to seat himself in her compartment. She took a carriage to the hotel in the Rue Grenelle-St.-Germain: Denis was in a cab behind her. The next morning she looked out for lodgings, and hired an apartment. Half an hour afterward the Jesuits were made acquainted with her address—Rue de la Barouillère, No. 5.

The house was quiet, in a quiet street; often there was not a carriage during the whole twenty-four hours. Yet it was a pleasant, airy, wide thoroughfare, with pavements on either side; a solitary spot in the midst of busy Paris; a charming retirement for mourners, students, or runaway lovers.

No. 5 had two sets of lodgings, one opening on the street, with a porter's lodge at the great door, the other looking into a little paved court, with not a single spring or summer flower to make it cheerful.

Louise's apartment was very simple, in accordance with her taste and slender means. At the entrance was a small lobby, then a sitting-room, and two bedrooms—one for her absent brother, whom she was ever expecting, the other for herself; close to the entrance a little nook, dignified by the name, style, and title of a kitchen. The whole was four stories up. We may add that it was exquisitely neat; and had Julio been there, it would have resembled the Louvre after the St. Avenin presbytery.

There Louise returned, evening after evening, cheerful or sad, according to her success in rousing government sympathies in her brother's behalf. The day she heard that an official dispatch had actually been sent to the French ambassador at Rome requesting Julio's release, she fell on her knees, as soon as she got home, in devout thankfulness; her little room seemed glorified with the brightness and beauty of the fairy halls of the Alhambra.

Among the persons of fashion whom she endeavored to interest in her brother's behalf was the Baroness de Tourabel, an intimate friend of the empress, and a great favorite at court, though she held no office there. On the other hand, as she belonged, on her mother's side, to the very highest families in the Faubourg St. Germain, she had numerous connections in that most aristocratic quarter. So the social position of the baroness was undeniable.

She had heard Louise's name, having spent some of her earliest years at T— with her father, who was an artillery general, and so became intimate with the La Clavière family. She was a very superior person, combining two qualities not often associated—kindheartedness

and general acuteness. She was greatly interested in Louise, and gave her powerful letters of recommendation to the foreign minister.

Louise by no means took advantage of the entreaty she received from Madame de Tourabel to pay her frequent visits. Now and then she called, staying too short a time, however, to please her new acquaintance, who eagerly sought her society, all surrounded though she was by numberless attractions of fashion and pleasure. Yet these casual interviews sufficed to create and foster between them a real friendship, which the poor girl found to be an inestimable comfort in her solitary position.

Above all, Louise relied upon her influence in the matter of Julio's release; and the baroness, who regarded her as her ideal of beauty of mind and body, drew her more and more to her side, and neglected no measures likely in any way to conduce to the liberation of the captive Julio.

At court and in society, she detailed the romantic particulars of Louise's abduction, and her still more romantic escape, with such striking exactness that the brother and sister became the hero and heroine of the moment in news-loving Paris.

CHAPTER II.

A FREE COUNTRY.

It may be asked how Jacomo managed to procure the key with which he had opened Julio's cell. Such a step would be all but impossible any where except in Rome. But there any thing may be done that's attempted in the right way.

The circumstances were as follows:

The principal jailer of the Inquisition prisons had been killed in the disturbance on the 2d of February. His successor was an old smuggler of Montalto, who, having failed in that highly honorable calling, resolved to seek a living in *some servant's place at Rome*. *Monsignor*, the representative of the Holy Office at Viterba, had given him a letter of recommendation; thanks to which acknowledgment of certain services, which it was equally inexpedient to detail or forget, Nicolo was promoted to the distinguished post of jailer of the Holy Office. He was a perfect Hercules—a man with the *look of a lion—ever so much fiercer than was necessary to guard such inoffensive creatures as Catarinella, the dreamer of Viterba, and our friend Julio*.

Jacomo, having convinced himself that none of the Roman police suspected him of a share in the assault on the prisons, so complete had been his disguise on that occasion, set himself to inspect the place and its bearings, with a view to further measures. It was poor work, however, so he thought, to walk round and round the cage; he must get inside.

One fine morning he had the audacity to

knock at the wicket, and ask, in a firm, commanding voice, to see the head jailer. He introduced himself by saying that he came from Viterba, and was a relation, though a distant one, of Laura Doni.

The jailer received him at the grating, and looked at him sharply.

"The Signora Doni," said he, "has nothing to say to any one. . . . But, per Dio Baccio," he added, a moment afterward, "I think I recognize you, my boy."

Jacomo thought he was lost; but, without betraying any emotion, returned the man's look with another of the most supreme indifference, and waited for what would follow.

"You're Jacomo."

"Yes; and who are you? I've certainly seen you before."

"My name is Nicolo."

"Give us your fist, then. We are the flower of Vetralla."

As it happened, they had been boys together, and together had served their rude apprenticeship to the smuggler's trade; after which they had separated, each following his own course. So they had not seen each other for many years.

It was an interview between old friends.

Jacomo, quite at his ease, adopted a patronizing tone.

"Nicolo," he said, "this is a horrid place you've got. You have other people under lock and key, but you are under lock and key yourself. It is easier to get to a cardinal than to get to you. Come back with me, man, to our glorious mountain country. You are young and lithe; you'll do well."

"Good wages here."

"All right; then leave them to your success; I'll get you married. Some worthy woman will bring you a fine, spanking dowry, and you'll have a home of your own. Oh, how I wish I could get you away from here!"

"Not easy. This is a certainty, you see; that's the point. I own, when I first came, I had no liking for a jailer's work. I didn't care to watch those who could not have hurt a fly. Now I am used to it. Besides, what would be the good of my posting off into the country?"

"Good? why, you may breathe there."

"What would you have, Jacomo? Man is a queer sort of a creature. I am suited to my position."

"Well, since you happen to be a friend of mine, you might as well tell me about poor Laura, who has a great reputation in our mountains. I saw her leave her home with a sorry escort."

"Just so. I have the honor of waiting upon that gracious lady. She delivers dreadful prophecies to me every now and then. Prophesying is her line, you see; only I need not tell you that, as you are one of her people. Every time I take her her food, she spins a yarn; of course, I never listen to her; between ourselves, I think she's a little cracked."

"And there's a French fellow caged up along with her, isn't there?"

"Oh yes, a priest; meek as a lamb."

"What's he done?"

"Done! a fellow doesn't come here for doing anything, Jacomo. The poor wretch is as good as gold; only in Rome they have a strange way of their own."

"Not tried yet, is he?"

"Tried! Oh no; they're never in a hurry about trying prisoners in the Eternal City, least of all in this shop."

And he added in a low voice,

"Look, Jacomo, that's his cell, the first round the corner; next one is Laura Doni's."

And Jacomo examined the outside of the cell carefully, and calculated the height of the wall next the street.

"That yard wall is easy enough to get over," he said.

"To get over, man! Why, you're clean daft; you don't suppose the yard is meant to walk in? A party would have to see the outside of his cell first, and that they never do here."

"Not even to get a mouthful of air?"

"No. It seems they can do without it. You see, Jacomo, this prison is not like the one the Holy Office had before. I saw that in 1848, and the sight was enough to keep one awake at night for six months after. Here our arrangements are merely provisional. As soon as we have got rid of these plaguy French, we shall return to our old palace, and sweet little underground cells. The fact is, we don't want to go to any expense in this place, we shall stop here so short a time. New doors and locks were all we had to get. Just look at them; they are strong enough."

"I should think so, if one might judge by the keys."

And, as he spoke, Jacomo looked narrowly at a huge bunch hanging up to a nail in Nicolo's low, narrow room.

"Thundering keys they are," he added; "has each cell got one to itself?"

"Oh no. This one belongs to those in the first court there, and opens a dozen of them."

And Nicolo showed his friend the keys of each court.

As he did so, Jacomo, with the quick eye of an old smuggler, had examined the one belonging to the first court, and, with wonderful dexterity, taken off its impression on some wax which he held in his hand. Then he chatted on with the jailer about a variety of things—among others, the idea, which he vainly urged upon him, of giving up his post—not that he cared an atom whether he did so or not; and at last took his departure, promising to come and have another talk with him very soon, before he went back to Vetralla.

From the prison he went straight to a locksmith's. On his way he hatched up a tale to the effect that he was porter to the Duke of San Claro; that he had lost the key of the duke's most particular wine-cellar, and didn't want his

master to know it. He showed the man the pattern of the key which he had himself prepared after the impression in the lock. As he promised to pay largely for the job, the locksmith did not consider it expedient to question the veracity of the narrative. It's true, a man in his business is harder to bribe than any other class in Rome. Still, money will do any thing, and Jacomo had a long purse. The next day he had the required key in his possession.

Having paid the price down, he left the shop; but, struck by a sudden idea, went back, and said to the man,

"In case this should fail, would you mind lending me a skeleton key?"

At first the locksmith refused; but Jacomo's scudi overcame his reluctance, and our ill-fated hero set out on the expedition, the sequel of which is already known, equipped with all that he required to insure his success.

Jacomo's two friends had got hold of Julio when he sank down exhausted in the street, and, darting into a narrow, winding street opposite the prison yard, out of the way of the soldiers who were conducting an eager search, they dragged rather than led their exhausted charge to the city gate, where horses were waiting. Then came a moment of dreadful anxiety. Where was Jacomo? Should they wait for him? He didn't climb the wall by the rope-ladder—had he been stopped at the bottom? had he fallen? These, and a hundred other questions, rose to their lips. Julio wanted to wait for his deliverer; but the two others, more experienced in similar emergencies, decided otherwise. It would have been madness for them to have delayed; they would have had the entire Roman police at their heels.

Taking a guide, they followed the road to Rocca-San-Stéphano, the nearest hamlet in the Apennines, below Subiaco, on the Neapolitan frontier. Once there, they were beyond the reach of the papal sbirri.

Loubère had gone there the day before, and was waiting, with feverish impatience, the result of this attempt—the last which the exhausted condition of his finances would have enabled him to arrange with the brave Jacomo.

What was Julio's astonishment on being addressed in French the moment he entered the Neapolitan frontier! During the journey, he could get nothing more out of his companions than a repetition of what had passed at Osteria della Sabina. They imagined at first, in their simplicity, that Jacomo had secured their services for the rescue of some young girl. Such exploits were quite in their line; but to get a man out of the prison of the Holy Office was another affair altogether; and had not Jacomo, well knowing the terror which the bare mention of the name was sufficient to inspire, kept a discreet silence on that head, they would have thought twice before they committed themselves to the enterprise. They knew nothing of the history connected with their bold deed, and Loubère's name had never passed their lips.

So Julio was fairly at sea. As the Frenchman came forward and grasped his hand, in a delirium of joy, the darkness prevented him from distinguishing his features, while the excitement of delight made the voice so indistinct, from emotion, that he utterly failed to recognize him.

"You don't know me," he said. "My name is Loubère, whose life you saved at St. Aventin. I have tried to pay the debt at Rome. But where is Jacomo?"

Julio saw through the whole thing. Loubère had been his deliverer.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER MURDER.

JULIO had been so long cut off from all external communication, that he waited, with the utmost anxiety, to learn all that had happened during his incarceration, and, above all, where and how Louise was.

Loubère told him of her fortunate escape to the frontier, her arrival at Savoy, his interview with her at Lans-le-bourg, his proceedings at Rome, and the failure of the ambassador's appeal to Cardinal Antonelli.

Then came a history of the demonstration of the 2d of February, and Jacomo's first attempt to rescue him. Alas! there could be little doubt that this time he had fallen a victim to his courageous devotion.

The two French priests were most hospitably entertained by the Reverend Father Villeta, superior of the Theatine monks at Rocca-San-Stéphano—a priest of Liberal ideas, who had been brave enough to withstand the dominant influence of the superior clergy. Julio suffered for a long time from an attack of low fever. Accustomed as he had been to unrestricted liberty, pure mountain air, and daily exercise, it was no matter of wonder that his sudden imprisonment in a wild beasts' den, where breeze or sunshine never came, and whose total area was two yards, had materially undermined his constitution. His appearance was entirely changed, his hair had grown white, and his whole system had suffered from general atrophy, like a plant long buried in the dark. The Holy Office had taken him in the prime of his youth, the brave smuggler released him a decrepit old man.

Loubère had agreed with Louise, before they left Lans-le-bourg on their separate journeys, to write to her regularly every week, and he kept his word. His letters came every Thursday, addressed to the Poste Restante; and Louise's delight was to go to the Rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau, and get a letter, announcing, if not her brother's escape, at all events some prospect of it.

Loubère's style was not Ciceronian; it was a mixture of the peasant, the soldier, and the churchman. His clerical education showed it-

self in various little details; the general effect was military, the thoughts were thoroughly good, exhibiting the courageous freedom of the genuine mountaineer spirit.

Loubère little thought that the pontifical police at Rome read all his letters. Louise, however, found it out from slight unavoidable tearings of the envelopes and the substitution of a false seal. Under the papal government, described as so mild and so courteous, the innermost secrets of bosom friends are exposed to the gaze of coarse, vulgar officials in the pay of Christ's representative on earth. Nothing escapes their eye; and since the presence in Rome of the army of occupation, even up to the present day, it has been necessary for the wives of general officers and others to be as careful as possible to make their letters vague and unimportant, lest the contents should reach the cardinal minister—a feature this in modern civilization which should not be lost sight of, if one would understand the character of that system which some are for upholding in the city of the Popes.

Loubère never suspected that copies of his letters had been addressed to the Archbishop of Chambéry, and that a terrible charge against him was being based upon them. It is easy to understand that a man of his style of mind and disposition would write in a tolerably outspoken way, and give utterance to sentiments strong enough to hang a less obnoxious character than himself. Here is one of his letters to a brother priest at Lans-le-bourg, by no means complimentary to the Eternal City:

"Do you know, my dear friend, that, notwithstanding the reverence due from a junior to a senior curate, I laughed till my sides ached on reading your letter. Oh, my charming lad, it's plain enough that you've only just left school, and that you are still full of those touching dreams that disappear so effectually in real life. You have an upright, honest spirit: all I desire for you is that, when your present impressions break up and go to pieces, your faith may not be washed overboard and sink to the bottom.

"No, I didn't go exclusively to Rome to kiss the Pope's toe, I assure you; I had another object, which I will mention by-and-by, and which I trust I am on the point of realizing. I must wait a few days, however—I grieve to say, a few idle days. Inaction, for an impulsive gentleman like myself, is a positive punishment; so, to lighten my sufferings and while away this tiresome interval, I have resolved that the best thing I can do is to write to a friend.

"You have put enough questions to me to require a volume by way of full reply, but I will endeavor to condense my answers as much as possible.

"You believe, you say, in the marvelous superiority of the Roman institutions, and congratulate me on being 'in a country distinguished' (to quote your own words) 'by purity

of morals and a general submissiveness to the high teaching of the Church, resulting in the nearest possible approach to the divine idea of the Gospel.'

"I know where you got that stunning sentence from, my fine fellow; it isn't your own; it's out of Veuillot—a neatly-worded paragraph enough, but slightly inaccurate.

"No doubt the clergy have made laws for the people; no doubt either that they profess to elevate them. A man is theirs from the moment of his birth; they get hold of him at once to baptize him, and never leave him till he's safe dead. Not a family but swarms with priests; and, to see the hosts of monks and secular clergy in the streets, one would suppose that true religion was nowhere better taught or better exemplified.

"Well, my dear friend, in order to convince you how true it is that 'this country is distinguished by purity of morals, etc.' (you know the rest), let me observe that, previous to the dismemberment of the Roman States, the average of assassinations a day was four or five, in a population of four millions. In France, with her thirty-five millions, previous to the recent annexation, there wasn't even one a day. And yet we are visited with the Code Napoleon; we have a university, lay rulers, and other kindred abominations!

"I may add that, while in France an assassin is looked upon with abhorrence, in Italy, provided he doesn't stick some fat old monk or priest, he is merely described as excitable and impulsive—that's all. For every hundred crimes of this category, justice notices about twenty. No witnesses appear. What then? Scarcely fair to be hard upon a worthy fellow, in the main, for such a trifle. He did it, not with the idea of robbing, but to avenge himself for some real or fancied injury, and it would appear that 'the divine idea of the Gospel' ignores such insignificant offenses.

"I may mention that robberies are not nearly so frequent here as assassinations. Covetousness is not a besetting sin of the Roman people. The only thieves here are highwaymen occasionally, and officials invariably, without a single exception.

"You are opening your eyes very wide, and beginning to think that the population of the Roman States, though so 'submissive to the high teaching of the Church' (I think that's the right way to put it), as well as innocent of any acquaintance with the *Siccle* or *Opinion Nationale*, are not exactly a collection of interesting saints. You may be pretty sure that the rest of the commandments are treated with equal indifference. How comes it? you ask. Simply from this fact: Let a man be clear about the absolute necessity for the world's salvation that the Pope should have temporal as well as spiritual power, and he may be or do any thing else he pleases. Sound on that point, he is welcome to attend to Christianity by-and-by. Perhaps you fancy they preach the Gospel here.

To be sure they do; there's nothing they're so anxious about—bless your heart! Why, my dear fellow, they have so many miracles to look after, so many wonderful madonnas to fête, so many saints, old and new, to commemorate, that there is no leisure left to attend to the rest—the rest being Jesus Christ and the Evangel message of His grace.

“As regards church ordinances, in all matters of external worship the Romans beat the French. Three fourths of the Pope's subjects would be more scandalized at seeing one of their neighbors dining off the wing of a fowl on a fast day than killing an enemy. In the latter case, they would come to his aid to protect him from the sbirri; in the former, they would be the first to denounce him to the Holy Office, remembering that the episcopate of the Roman States, assembled in council at Loreto in 1856, published an edict detailing the crimes, cognizance of which is intrusted to the Inquisition—among which are neglect of saints' days, want of respect for the Church, and remissness in the observance of fasts. For these deadly offenses the punishments awarded are excommunication, imprisonment, banishment, and death; and to him who fails to disclose them, when he knows of their being committed, the same penalties.

“Such were the pleasing arrangements of 1856—a graceful reply to the echoes of reform in every other part of Europe. Such is a specimen of those sublime enactments before which a well-known prelate bows with admiring love.

“There's no mistake but the Romans have plenty of law. There are canons, briefs, and pontifical bulls. All these various little edicts are, at times, inconsistent. The Pope speaks in such and such terms, and goes down to the grave. His successor flatly contradicts him. But, as they are all infallible, it stands to reason that they must all be right, so all their proclamations are legally binding. For example, in the disgraceful affair of the boy Mortara, bulls were quoted for and against the abduction. Pius VI. not only allowed the baptism of Jewish infants without their parents' consent, but also the forcible removal of them from the parents' roof, on the pretext that they had been baptized, as in the Mortara case. Now the decisions of the Holy Office are diametrically opposite, and yet they profess to be infallible, being invested with papal authority. And as, at that time, the uppermost idea was to return to the spirit and teaching of the Middle Ages, the Inquisition influence had the ascendancy. No decree is ever repealed at Rome. Bulls, edicts of any kind, buried possibly for many an age, may, at any time, rise from their graves, according to the measure of idiocy in the governing mind. And, speaking of Jews, what do you think, my friend, of that pleasant injunction requiring a physician, when called in by one of the Hebrew race, first to try and convert him, and, failing that, to leave him to his fate? Mark you, Jews are prohibited from studying or

practicing medicine. Do you imagine that the august inquisitors who produced that precious enactment, or the holy popes who authorized it, ever studied a certain well-known story of a good Samaritan?

“I hated the Inquisition before I came here; but how infinitely has that hatred deepened, now that I have seen all it has done, all it could do, in the forging of letters, the elaborating of tortures, and the trampling out of the life of human conscience and rights. To annihilate it, you must annihilate the temporal power. The popes are more or less muzzled. Not one of them dare destroy it. Its cells are still occupied and its laws active, while the edict of 1856 accorded it the power of life and death.

“When, in 1848, I saw a few fools trying to revive the horrors of 1793 by exhibiting waistcoats à la Robespierre and Marat, I felt a creeping sensation. Such, too, I experience when I meet a white-robed Dominican; he brings with him memories equally bloody. After all, our Convention leaders were but weak imitators of the Inquisition; and the law with reference to suspected persons was mild in the extreme when regarded side by side with the savage edicts of the Holy Office. It did not enjoin wives, mothers, and children to denounce those dearest to them, under pain of death, as they did. The horrible profanation of the tombs of St. Denis is but a plagiarism, the original act having been perpetrated by the inquisitor-monks when they flung out the remains of heretics on the common highway. No reverence did they show for the bones of princes, assuming that those princes had failed in a single point of orthodoxy; and the Convention merely followed in their steps, and heaped like insult on crowned heads, whose only offense was royal rank, the climax of heterodoxy in the judgment of the Revolutionist. The Convention disgraced our glorious Revolution; the Inquisition disgraces Catholicism—more hideous even, more encrimsoned with gore, more fashioned after the genius of hell. The political terror of the one only lasted two years; that of the other through five long lingering ages!

“As for the ceremonies you allude to, they are certainly imposing, but really there is in them a great element of the ridiculous. They are far more theatrical than religious. The Pope, carried by bearers, and embosomed in golden draperies, reminds me forcibly of the arrangements of an Indian pagoda. You gaze at him with curiosity; but the last idea in your mind is that he has the slightest connection with Christianity—a queer successor, he, of the fisherman of Galilee! The only time when he ever looks what he pretends to be is when from the balcony of St. Peter's he blesses the Christian world. Then he does, indeed, appear as the spiritual monarch of Catholicism; and before a royalty so exalted, all others perish miserably.

“You remark that the greater number of vacant places in Rome are given to laymen; true; but no quibbling—places, not authority. There

were seven or eight thousand officials, of various grades, in the Roman States before the recent upset; an army officered by cardinals and priests exclusively. It is so now. It's true that all the monsignori are not in orders; that they may lay aside their official garb, and marry at any moment; but then they must resign their post. And it is a noteworthy fact, that such is the horror of lay authority entertained here, that they force a layman to dress as a cleric before admitting him to office.

"It was imagined at the accession of Pius IX. that a new order of things was about to set in—a mere imagination, nothing more. Had he had sufficient firmness—which he had not—he was without the necessary powers. No single man could clean the Angean stables. Then, too, an enlightened pope may be followed by one from a monk's cell, whose first act would be to undo whatever might have been attempted by his predecessor in the way of reform.

"The revolution which will so soon overturn the temporal power will annihilate at the same time this *effète* system, under the incubus of which the Church has so long writhed convulsively. The Pope-king belongs to the Italians; the Pope, simply, to the Catholic world. The struggles in connection with the kingly element have resulted in so deplorable a state of things that none but an Italian can ascend the chair of St. Peter; embarrassing, as I think (I say it with reverence), for the Holy Spirit of God, invoked, as we all know, to guide the papal elections. 'Holy Spirit,' is the invocation, 'we want a Pope; enlighten us as to our choice. Veni, Creator Spiritus—only mind, he must be an Italian.' Far better ones might be found in other parts; and surely the spiritual sovereign of 200,000,000 should be elected sometimes elsewhere than in one out-of-the-way corner; only, you see, in that corner is a small temporality which must be looked after; a little political farm, requiring a special kind of farmer—neither French, nor English, nor yet Spanish, but Italian.

"So, 'Holy Spirit, descend, we pray Thee, and name an Italian!' Awkward dilemma that for Him who is invoked, to which the Revolution will put an end.

"After all, this solemn invocation is but a pleasant fiction. Every thing is a fiction at Rome. That's the place for cunningly-devised fables, and strange old tales well fitted to sing Catholic humanity to sleep in the snugly-lined cradle of indolence and credulity. There you may have poetic legends composed in the sweet seclusion of the cloister, apocryphal relics, traditions rivaling the wonders disclosed in the pages of Lemprière—not, mind you, told to make men laugh or cry round wide old hearths at Christmas time, but told to men who are commanded to believe them, but who, at last, are erecting themselves into an attitude of kingly scorn as they repel the insolent lies, and order truth. Possibly the Church, emancipated from secular trammels, may enter yet on a new, a spiritual

path, and reappear, in the words of Lacordaire, 'clothed with the old glory that invested her before the time of Constantine.' Such happy destiny I wish her, and you a thousand blessings.

"LOUBÈRE."

Happily Loubère was not so imprudent as to be explicit in his letters to Louise; certain phrases, agreed upon between them, sufficed for all practical purposes. On all other points, however, he was by no means careful in his phrases. His rash sentences often made her smile, while they were working out for him a heavy penalty.

His last letter was as follows:

"I leave Rome in a couple of hours; I shall be in a free country to-night, ready to join the general cry, 'Roma veduta, fede perdita!' And it is more especially at Rome that the desire for freedom burns in the bosoms of those who have not the distinguished honor of being cardinals, monsignori, robbers, or beggars. Three cheers for liberty, and the glorious prospect it will bring with it!"

The next day Louise received a telegraphic dispatch through Ancona running thus:

"Rocca-San-Stéphano.

"Thanks to Loubère and Jacomo, I am free. I am very anxious as to the latter. Loubère goes back to Lans-le-bourg. After a few days' rest I shall start for Paris."

In fact, Loubère, after having spent two delightful days with his friend, set out for Turin through the Marches. His leave of absence from the Archbishop of Chambéry was already up, so he felt it desirable to return as soon as he possibly could.

Julio took a full month to recover his shattered health. Father Vilette was a most attentive doctor and devoted friend. Constant amusements, little walks, a generous and well-regulated diet, served by degrees to repair the deadly work that his short sojourn in the Inquisition cell had accomplished.

He concluded that Loubère was at this time peaceably installed in his curacy, and expected to hear from him of his safe arrival, when an inclosure came from Paris containing two letters, one from his sister, the other from his friend.

Louise impatiently entreated her brother to come. She declared she could not rest till she had him under her eye.

Loubère's communication was very serious:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You little expected to get a letter from me dated Paris. You thought I was in my mountain home, looking after my poor, humble peasants. Nothing of the sort. Let me tell you what has happened.

"On reaching Lans-le-bourg I found my vicar pulling a very long face at me.

"'You're wanted at the palace,' he said; 'you must go at once to Chambéry. You're no longer curate here; your successor has been appointed.'

"I told him I wanted to go and celebrate a mass.

"His answer was simply, 'You can't.'

"How, can't?" I said. "Am I suspended or interdicted?"

"Don't know," he replied; "but the archbishop has written to me to say that you no longer belong to the diocese. As to the reason why, etc., you must settle that with his highness."

"It was no good disputing with this worthy man, so I set off for Chambéry. There, there was a row, I believe you, of no mean kind. You know my character, and how desperate I can be when I am driven to it. The archbishop received me in his small drawing-room. I was informed that my license was withdrawn, and that I might have, if I chose, an *'exeat pro quacunque diocesi'*."

"You're in a tremendous hurry with your *'exeat'*, monseigneur," I said; "may I ask what I've done?"

"I'm not required to give you a reason for my conduct, sir. I have full power to employ or dismiss you."

"Not without some cause, monseigneur."

"Cause, sir! plenty of that. Not to mention your conduct at T——, which won't bear inspection, your goings on at Rome are quite sufficient."

"My goings on at Rome, monseigneur! I have done nothing to be ashamed of. I have only served a good cause, that's all."

"The government of his Holiness differs from you. You have been most severely denounced."

"Will your highness have the goodness to show me the letter?"

"Not by any means, sir. What impudence, for an inferior to ask his superior to show him his correspondence with Rome!"

"My monkey was up by this time."

"Impudence, monseigneur! What do you mean? You have an accusation against me, and refuse to show it me! You positively decline to specify the complaints! You condemn me unheard! I'll never believe that! You're joking! It's impossible!"

"It's quite possible, sir. However, you shall hear some of the complaints. You have been living a life totally unsuited to your priestly character. You have mixed with low company. You have reviled the Pope, the cardinals, and the Jesuits; also, you have conspired at Rome against the temporal power. You have allied yourself with the enemies of the Church. You have applauded their demonstrations, especially that of the 2d of February. We know all about you. You even tried to bribe a domestic prelate in the papal court, but he scorned your overtures."

"That's a lie! He was the easiest fellow to bribe you ever met with. He never repelled my overtures; only he sacked my money."

"You are libelous, sir; you might be prosecuted for slander."

"Oh, I'm no more libelous than thousands of others, who'll say the same at any moment. Robbers and spies—robbers and spies; that's the sort that the papal government is made up of."

"You see, my dear Julio, I saw I was a gone character, so I determined to have my say. I thought it would be a bit of fun to put my prelate in a passion. There's always something amusing in a holy Roman's episcopal rage, and I wanted a laugh."

"My most reverend Savoyard was wild."

"Here are copies, sir, of every letter you have written to a female called La Clavière, full of most damnable proofs against you."

"Monseigneur," I replied very quietly, "there is not a single sentence in any one of them the least inconsistent with the respect due to that most admirable young lady."

"Be it so," said the archbishop; "but, quite apart from that, the correspondence is full of proofs of your temper and views sufficient to humble you before me, under a grateful sense of my kindness in granting you an *'exeat'*, and not insolently fly into a passion with an archbishop."

"In another moment I should have made a dash at the fellow, and punished him at my leisure."

"Monseigneur," I said, "you know better even than I do that your *'exeat'*, as you call it, is so much waste paper. No bishop will receive me without a letter of recommendation. Do you mean to give me one?"

"I mean to do my duty by you."

"Shilly-shallying again—always shilly-shallying. I ask you, monseigneur, whether, when I present myself to another bishop, you authorize me to tell him that you will recommend me? That's a plain question, isn't it? I want an answer. You must see that it would be ridiculous for me to go and knock at the doors of some ten or a dozen bishops, to receive invariably the same greeting, "Where is your recommendation from your late diocesan?"

"You wish me to be plain with you, sir, do you? Well, then, I won't recommend you. You have been too insolent to Rome—insolence which affects us in common with the rest of the episcopal bench. Understand that the police are perfectly aware of your occupation the last few days of your residence in the Papal States."

"Then your sentence is one of final banishment from the priesthood, monseigneur?"

"It's whatever you like, sir."

"And, abruptly nodding, he intimated to me that it was time to go."

"As for me, I didn't return it. A secretary gave me an *'exeat'*, which I have preserved as a curious and interesting document. I left the palace in a towering rage. Convinced in my own mind that no French bishop would venture to receive one who had offended the Jesuits and made light of the temporal power, I sold my clerical dress, and paid my place to Paris with the profits."

"So here I am, thrust out of the priesthood;

not daring to confess my orders, lest I should meet with a general repulse. And all this in consequence of a malicious report—the exaggeration of the Roman police—and the outrageous lies of the sneaking coward that stole my money. I have not infringed my priestly obligation in a single particular. My life has been stainless. Yet, without any inquiry as to my private acts, in the midst of the most horrible temptations, without giving me a chance of defending myself at a trial, they have passed a summary sentence, and driven me from my sacred office.

“At first it seemed to me to be a case of looking forward to breaking stones; or, if I were not strong enough for that, of begging, with the eventual prospect of dying in a ditch.

“But, thank God! my friend, it’s not come to such a pitch. I am a man, and I can work. So here I am, installed in a printing-office in the Boulevard Pigale. ‘In the sweat of my face I eat bread,’ without giving the enemies of the Church the gratification of being in at my death, or watching me parading my disgrace before their vindictive eyes.

“I make no reference to your sister, as she is going to write herself. She made me a generous offer of assistance worthy of you both, but which I felt compelled to decline. You are poor yourselves now—thanks to my friends and yours; nor could I possibly make you pay for my slight return of the past services you rendered me.

“I am looking out for your arrival almost as impatiently as your sister. The hour is come when, on the strength of those persecutions which have elevated you to the dignity of a martyr—above all, on the strength of your long meditation—sole relief in the gloom of your cell—you must raise your flag and march boldly to the front.

“Your glorious aspirations, which you communicated to me at Rocca-San-Stéphano, must be realized at once. The old state of things is dying out on every side. The religious world is no better than a carcase, galvanized by the Jesuits and their obedient satellites, the monks, of every character, rank, and guise. There is no life left in it, I am certain. I know you, in some measure, think otherwise; for my part, I can not agree with you. Truth is inseparable from sympathy, fatherly love, and tender devotion. In going where these are to be found, I shall be sure to encounter it.

“Adieu, dear friend. We long for the happy day when the emancipated victim of the Inquisition will put in his appearance in Paris—Paris, the great and glorious—the home of freedom of thought, liberty, and delight.

“So come as soon as you can.

“LOUBÈRE.”

CHAPTER IV.

CATHOLICISM AND LIBERTY.

THE day after he received the letters contained in the previous chapter, Julio, notwith-

standing his weakness, determined to quit his hospitable refuge at Rocca-San-Stéphano. Let us follow him to the free soil of France, where the officers of the Inquisition have no power to injure him; where wise laws protect a priest, even if they can’t always rescue him from positions of peril. Here he is at length restored to his sister, whom he had rescued from the cloister. The little room in the Rue Barouillière is their quiet home, where they may rest, ennobled by affliction, and ripening for glorious service to the Church of Christ.

As Loubère concluded, Julio’s reflections in his retreat had not been without result. He at once surrounded himself with a circle of liberal minds and theological writers, whom the extravagancies of ultramontaniam had greatly exasperated. Some of them had been associated with Lacordaire’s *Nouvelle Ere*, and their invariable motto was the union of Liberty and Catholicism. The *Catholic Liberal* became their organ, in which they advocated a cause abandoned by the superior clergy, and espoused only by loyal-hearted men, who have learned never to despair.

The first numbers of the new paper were welcomed with acclamation by the European press. Julio’s name attached; the remembrance of his cruel imprisonment in the prison of the Holy Office; his wonderful escape, to the surprise of all who had heard of it; his undoubted talent, and the courage with which he had avowed sentiments repudiated at Rome with the sternest abhorrence—all this combined to secure a welcome for his paper.

Julio was an able, eloquent, and pointed writer, as the *Catholic Atlas* frequently discovered to its cost. His scheme was very simple: Total separation between Church and State, in the mutual interests of both; liberty of conscience—unmistakably proclaimed in the Gospel by the words and deeds of the great Head of the Church, as illustrated in his rebuke of those who would fain have brought down fire from heaven on an unbelieving city; the papacy free from the cares of royalty; the episcopacy recognizing its obligations; the inferior clergy emancipated from the perpetual obligation of their priestly vows. Such were the outlines of the reformation the *Catholic Liberal* proposed in its first impression. The whole idea was Gallicanism disenthralled from the bondage of civil power, and a thorough return to the teaching of the first ages of the Church. A pleasant morsel this for the digestion of a pontifical and priestly oligarchy. It is easy to imagine the mingled sensations which so original a publication would occasion in the “religious world.”

CHAPTER V.

THE GIPSY PRIESTHOOD.

AMONG the dignitaries attached to the Archbishop of Paris is an official entitled M. le Pro-

moteur. Should you be a priest, and feel a natural anxiety to ascertain the origin of this gentleman's designation, you will find that he is the individual appointed for the agreeable work of promoting or elevating you. Such, at least, is the theory of the name. In reality, however, this functionary is charged with the task of maintaining a general watch over the clerical world, of issuing any needful rebukes, and, in some cases, of abasing instead of exalting. Sometimes, even, the promoter may be seen as the assessor of an archbishop, discharging duties not very unlike the president of an assize court. With both alike, the accused is held guilty *à priori*; the one being ready with capital punishment, the other with "the retreat au célebre," suspension or interdict. Fortunately for the accused, if the promoter is extra severe, the prelate may possibly be lenient, and so a compromise is effected. But, under any circumstances, the poor priest is indeed to be pitied who falls into the clutches of this anomalous Jack-in-office.

Generally speaking, the promoter's position is no light one. Were he to confess the truth, he would be compelled to admit that his burden is burdensome in the extreme. Apart from the reverend personages who are everlastingly coming to him to get their célebre signed, he is intrusted with the care of all the errant priests from every quarter of the world.

Every melodramatic hero who has managed to escape public justice, through lack of vigilance and activity on the part of the police, or whom the police themselves have assisted in escaping, from a desire to preserve Catholic dominions from the fame of exploits more romantic than equitable, leaves his card at the promoter's office. Every sham Oriental bishop, who, displaying a white beard down to his waist, maintaining a discreet silence, lest he should make a slip and speak French, and sporting a secretary well up in Armenian, Arabic, and Syriac, comes to France, on a charitable errand, in behalf of some legendary Christians at Lebanon, Aleppo, or Antioch, whose abodes have been burnt by the Druses, makes a similar call. Ditto the numerous "monks," who, with the same invariable chin decoration, fall, bathed in tears, at the feet of credulous Parisians, imploring their aid in the construction of a Carmelite monastery or pilgrim hospice among the rocks of Petra, or, more eligible and airy situation, on the heights of Tabor. Ditto every "priest," with a miscellaneous assortment of letters testimonial and episcopal recommendations, albeit never penned by episcopal hands. Ditto the noble army of bandits, after having scoured a score of dioceses, humbugged a score of bishops, and plundered a score of parishes. These all, an illustrious host—dramatic hero, mitred Eastern, snow-clad abbot, solemn-browed cleric, and gay freebooter—besiege in turn, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, the private room of this miserably-overworked official. The promoter is expected to

discern at once between good and evil, false and true, alike in characters or beards, and to decide, at a moment's notice, whether his visitor be a very reverend father or a very irreverent outlaw. It is assumed that he has wit enough to take liberties at once with the long, flowing robe of the most illustrious Oriental prelate, the hood of the monk, the cloak of the abbé, exposing the true identity beneath the awe-inspiring disguise. It ought to be a joke to him to analyze, in the twinkling of an eye, the most astute "story," let the adventurer who brings it be who he may, or his country among the remotest on the face of the earth. As for seals—exhibiting every conceivable variety of cross, and every thing that is impressive and august in the way of mottoes—these should be trifles in the path of his scrutiny, if he is to be civil to honest men, and to tell the rogues at once that "he will take time to consider their request."

So that it will be pretty evident that the hands of the excellent promoter are tolerably full.

In the year 1861—the year of which we are writing—the office above described was filled by the Abbé de Baraminos, whom the juniors of the junior clergy amused themselves by nicknaming "M. Gare-à-Minos." He was a tall, shriveled-up sort of a man, middle-aged, with sharp, thin features, and a few straggling white hairs; good-natured enough, as a rule, if you knew how to manage him, on days when he had escaped a sparring match with his little old housekeeper, or had come to a friendly understanding as to fondling with his cat Nina.

The Jesuits having learned, through their police spies, that Julio, thanks to Giacomo, had escaped to the frontier, and was sure to return to France for the purpose of rejoining his sister at Paris, prepared to take their measures accordingly.

Assembled in council, they resolved to make every effort to prevent him from being accepted by the ecclesiastical authorities, otherwise, by virtue of his own undoubted talents, as well as from the interest which the tale of his adventures would arouse among the clergy, he stood a fair chance of becoming the hero of the day.

Could they but contrive to get the archbishop to shut the doors of the Paris churches in his face, his connection with the various priests of the city would be considerably limited, if not altogether prevented. Men under an interdict are not much sought after. Thus the honor of the clergy would be saved, and then what matter how great a stir the brother and sister might manage to make in the unbelieving world.

Above all, it was of the utmost importance that, with his unquestionable oratorical powers, he should be kept away from pulpits. He was just the man, after the maturing experience he had had, to take all Paris by storm, if he once got the ear of the congregations, and recall to their memories those extempore effusions of Laccordaire, which used once to delight them—a preacher who had by no means been replaced

by Father Felix, with all his ambitious style and elaborate artistic sentences, let the Jesuit press assert the contrary as much as they pleased.

It was not exactly practicable to go straight to the cardinal archbishop, and prefer a request that the obnoxious priest might be shown the door. Unscrupulous and undaunted as the Jesuits are, there are limits which they dare not cross, and not a bishop in France would willingly suffer them to administer his diocese. Moreover, the kind and gentle dignitary enthroned at Paris could at once make manifest his resolve to act with strict impartiality. Any impressions he might receive prejudicial to Julio would naturally be very transient. The suggestion that the young priest should be dealt with severely, being necessarily couched in very moderate terms—otherwise their failure would be certain—would for that very reason be soon forgotten; while it was also a matter of uncertainty whether Julio would go direct to the archbishop or not.

The more prudent course appeared to be to put M. Baraminos on his guard. So, accordingly, the most cunning and plausible of their body was appointed to deal with him. His name was Father Fichet. He was in the habit of meeting the promoter occasionally in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the saloons of the Duchess of Chautenay, a lady to whom he stood in the relation of spiritual director, and in whose case he took the warmest possible interest. Her daughter, the Countess de Vezère, was on the list of the Abbé Baraminos.

The stately mansion of the duchess was at some little distance from the residence of the promoter. It was a great rendezvous for the upper classes of religious society, who were fond of assembling there.

"I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in the course of the week," said Father Fichet to the Abbé Baraminos.

"You will oblige the good father, I am sure," said the countess, in an under tone: "he has a request to make."

Thus the ground was skillfully and tenderly prepared; yet, at the same time, there is no such thing as a moderate Jesuit. A man is either one heartily, or he is not one at all; and no man was more thoroughly the servant of his order than Father Fichet.

So, having assumed his gentlest aspect, and prepared himself with his most insinuating modes of address, he repaired to the promoter's. After an elaborate preamble, conceived in true diplomatic style to disguise the real purport of his visit, and after having requested the promoter's favorable energies in connection with certain pious projects which he detailed—a request which was at once and most readily granted, as the abbé imagined that it was to that that the countess had already alluded—the reverend father turned the conversation to the startling events that were taking place in Italy—the reprobate Revolutionists, with Victor Emmanuel at their head, all of whom the Pope had excommu-

nicated; the various conspiracies, and the demonstration of the 2d of February. He stated that the society had received most elaborate as well as most interesting information upon all these points. It would appear that a French priest, who had since been interdicted by the Cardinal Archbishop of Chambéry, had taken a leading part in that outbreak. Finally, he mentioned that another French priest, who had been condemned to imprisonment by the Congregation of the Holy Office for having violated the cloister of a nunnery, had effected his escape. That, after having been banished from the diocese of T— for his publications and libelous attacks on the Jesuits, he had been received with open arms by the disaffected clergy of Naples, and had come from there to Paris. That he was at that moment conspiring in Paris against the temporal power of the Pope, and was about to issue a journal advocating the proscribed doctrines of liberty of the press, liberty of conscience, and separation of Church and State. "This priest," added the Jesuit, with consummate artfulness, "will, of course, be prohibited by the archbishop from mixing with the Paris clergy; it would be too great a scandal, in the judgment of all right-thinking people, to see such a man at the altar or in the pulpit."

"I have not met him yet at the palace," said the promoter, "but I am much obliged to you for your important information about him."

That was enough for the Jesuit; he finished up with a few words—*bonbons*—and departed.

The blow was struck.

Julio had had too much experience to entertain the slightest doubt as to the probable nature of his reception at Paris. He knew that his powerful persecutors were as supreme there as every where else, even over the episcopal throne itself. Loubère's fate at Chambéry led him to anticipate his own. He felt certain that he was already scored down in the worst ink at the palace. However, he committed his cause to Him who sways the highest as well as the lowliest hearts, and as throughout his whole life he had never uttered word or sentiment against ecclesiastical authority, nor written a single line in disparagement of that judicious rule which is the real strength of the Church and her clergy in the centre of so many counteracting weaknesses, he resolved that it was due to himself, his personal dignity, and the honor of the priesthood that he should carry out his mission to the end. So he accepted, without a murmur, the martyr's recompense that awaited him for his unsparing exposure of abuses and their authors, who, happily, however mighty in the Church, did not constitute her entire corporation, but left behind them some to sympathize with him, and render justice not only to the sincerity and good faith, but also to the truth of his statements.

As a precautionary measure, he wrote, in the first instance, to ask his friend, the Bishop of A—, to give him a letter of introduction to the archbishop.

The archbishop had had some intimation of the Forcassi affair and the subsequent imprisonment, and had taken a most judicious view of the case, so far as he was acquainted with it. He was by no means prepared to espouse the quarrels of the Jesuits and the Holy Office, or to recognize the authority of Roman associations; and, though he abstained from any open avowal of his opinion upon this point, he nevertheless practically made frequent protests against the domineering tendencies of the papal court. Nor was he ignorant either of the fact that the higher officials in the government, and the more educated and intelligent section of society, were much interested in Julio's history.

All that had transpired at T—— previous to the abbé's leaving the diocese he made light of, and received our hero with marked kindness, extending to him full sanction to officiate in Paris; adding, with a very gracious air,

"The second chaplain of the Lycée of St. Louis is about to leave. I nominate you to the vacant post."

So, for once, the Jesuits missed the mark. As for the promoter, a quarter of an hour's conversation with the wise and gentle prelate brought him over to complete agreement with his eminence in his opinions and consequent action.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW SLANDER WAS ATTEMPTED.

YET the Jesuits were not to be beaten. They spared no pains to hinder Julio from getting a name, shining in the pulpit, and being the favorite of Parisian society. In achieving this object, they felt that they were crushing an enemy of their order, and, consequently, promoting the glory of God. To any one who has not studied the monkish system, there are certain considerations which appear monstrous, but which are capable, nevertheless, of most easy explanation. To do evil deliberately, to pursue with implacable animosity, to calumniate in every possible way a known foe—all this seems utterly opposed to the teaching of the Gospel, which urges the forgiveness of injuries and love of enemies. Such principles are repudiated by every upright heart. While many would allow themselves in the indulgence of contempt as dignified and becoming, they would shrink from vengeance as being too injurious, and start back in abhorrence from the bare thought of calumny as an odious thing—too odious to be tolerated. Such being the case, the question naturally arises, in what possible way could men, devoted avowedly to self-mortification, and strivings after personal sanctity, justify themselves in a deadly persecution of a gentle and blameless man, as though he had been a monster of iniquity, and an enemy of God and man? For it is not only individuals who thus persuade themselves into so extraordinary a course, but corporations acting in concert, and adopting, through arguments the

miserable fallacy of which a baby might expose, a systematic line of malicious and slanderous attack. They kill with the barb of the tongue—the poison of misrepresentation; and that, too, without remorse or regret, without the slightest suspicion that they have infringed in a single respect the law of man and God.

How is this to be explained?

Had Julio, instead of being what he was, been an assassin—a Dumolard; had he met one of these very Jesuits in the dark of the evening in some out-of-the-way place, and stabbed him to the heart, the victim would have died forgiving him, and prayed for his murderer's soul with his latest breath.

Meanwhile, reverting to the darkness of mediæval days, should society intrust the function of the magistrate to the priest, and grant full powers for the execution of those condemned as heretics by the infallible Inquisition, this very man would erect the stake and light the fagots with delirious ecstasy.

You shudder with horror?

And yet the explanation is very simple. It is a mere error of vision. Say a huntsman fires at a dark mass in the herbage, which he mistakes for a wolf, and finds he has killed a brother or a friend—would you call that homicide?

The monk pardons his enemy, because that enemy's attack has been directed upon himself. It is a private question, and he deals with it according to the Gospel law of love, as applied to his individual relations to his brethren. Be it added, in praise of his piety, that his pardon is genuine. But the man who is condemned by the Inquisition is regarded as the enemy of God, and the monk intrusts himself with the high function of avenging the divine honor. He regards himself as being in the world for that purpose only. And the more skeptical society becomes, the more conscious the monk is compelled to be of the lessening influence of his rites and observances on the society in the centre of which he practices them, the more furiously does he alight on the head of any offender whom he may regard as a ringleader in the general disaffection.

But why, it will be added, are such savage bigots allowed free scope in the world?

That's a mere matter of accident. There are those always ready to support them. And as for France, we have seen French women, these ten years past, doting on Dominicans, Capuchins, and Carmelites, and, above all, on the beloved Jesuits! God grant that you and I, reader, for your sake and mine, may have quitted this enlightened world ere the day come that shall witness the return of Inquisitional power, and the re-erection of the Inquisitional stake in the Place de Grève.

For this query is often proposed: Should the men at present supreme in the Church have the power hereafter of wielding the secular arm, would they put any to death who might be found resisting their will?

To this question there is but one answer—in

the affirmative. It is by no means uncommon to see monks, such as Jesuits, Dominicans, or Capuchins, enter the mansions of the great and wealthy; demand to be forthwith conducted to the library, where the nobles of the eighteenth century have treasured up the mightiest intellects of their day; take down, one by one, the works of Molière, Montesquieu, Buffon, Rousseau, and Voltaire, and burn them, with merciless deliberation, in the presence of the abashed and speechless faithful.

And I ask such of you as are among the most distinguished in the school of modern thought and intellect—do you believe, for a moment, that if these men were permitted to avail themselves of the civil power to the fullest extent, they would hesitate to carry out, to the very uttermost, their desperate laws for the extirpation of all who dare to think for themselves?

You, M. Cousin—academician though you are—would smart for your independent teaching. M. Jules Simon, it would go hard with you after those fine pages that you have written. M. Lamartine, don't think you would escape after having ventured on the somewhat original and pathetic theology which confides to my keeping my dog Rover in another world. As for George Sand, with his vigorous and burning eloquence, a single one of his nervous periods is enough to bring down upon him all the fagots that could be accumulated from all the German forests; while Victor Hugo would find that he had acted injudiciously in not submitting *Les Misérables* to orthodox critical inspection before its publication.

Alas! we shudder to write it—these bigots would glory in a united holocaust of the master intellects we have named, and imagine that in the flames of the huge human sacrifice would ascend the incense of a grateful offering to the throne of God, while his glory on earth would be advanced by the wholesale immolation.

Let it be added, however, that, in opposition to this fanatical section in the Church, there exists a body of secular clergy which repudiates these outrageous tenets, and blushes for the bloody annals of the past. Let it be added that, in the darkest by-gone periods, the blood-thirsty fanaticism of the monk invariably surpassed that of the rest of the clergy. The grand principle that truth submits itself to the understanding, and does not deign to compel acceptance, plainly as it is written in the Bible, was the theory only of the latter class. It has been the characteristic tenet of the French Church for more than three hundred years; and if the nineteenth century reproaches us with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the passing of other measures designed for the persecution of the Protestants, it must be remembered that these, like all other intolerant acts, were the result of Jesuit influence.

Failing stakes and blocks, however, at the present day, there is a first-rate engine of destruction easily worked, whose name is Calumny, as Julio soon discovered on his arrival at Paris. Efforts were made on all sides to destroy his reputation,

to involve him in perplexities, to compromise him hopelessly, and generally to render his name a by-word in the narrow religious clique likely to be affected by such proceedings. Sacristans, beadles, choristers, bell-ringers, holy-ware peddlers, little book-stall keepers, statuarys, and other artists engaged in the manufacture of rosaries and miraculous medals, composed this illustrious community. Denis was among them, with a train-band, asserting that Julio had apostatized, and even become a skeptic; that he had gone to Italy on a visit to the excommunicated Passaglia, and that the two heretics were putting their heads together to construct a new religion, specially adapted to the views of Democrats and Red Republicans; while in the very hottest circles of wild fanaticism, the rumor grew to the extent that Julio and Passaglia had all but completed their arrangements for putting the latter in the chair of St. Peter, and Garibaldi on the throne of France.

Nor did they let Louise alone. They made the most of her escape from the convent, and her friendship for Loubère, declaring that she was a professed nun, who had flung off the veil. The society selected for these latter rumors consisted mainly of female artisans, chambermaids, fruit-sellers, and portresses.

Such calumnies, when once suffered to alight in the public mind, take deep root, and become almost ineradicable, distilling their venom at all times and in all directions. To destroy the reputation of a man in distinguished position, the most direct course is to prejudice the lowest orders against him in the first instance. The tide surges and seethes upward, covering range after range in the social scale with its polluted waters, till it reaches the highest elevation, and engulfs the whole.

In upper circles, however, the slander requires to be of a more polished character. To this end three reiterated complaints were put in circulation, and certain members of the society of St. Vincent de Paul, devoted old ladies, and warm allies of the sons of Loyola, were commissioned (it was their one sole work) to "cry out in a lamentable voice" whenever they happened to meet the vicar-general of Paris, "How is it that a priest who has written against the Jesuits is permitted to officiate? Can it be right that a gentleman against the triple crown and sceptre should enter the pulpit? Is it proper that the clergy of Paris should be all-hail and well-met with a jail-bird?" referring, it may be observed, to the Inquisition cell.

The elderly females were, to do them justice, very diligent in their task, feeling sure that, in thus backing up the most eminent servants of God, they were making giant strides to heaven. Then, petty remarks like these are catching; many excellent people were scandalized at the "conduct" of the pestilent priest and the principles of his unprincipled journal. For the larger section of the community, meanwhile—that class which does not allow itself to be overburdened with religious requirements, and ad-

mits them only to the threshold of its tastes and pleasures, precluding all encroachments on their domain—the class, in short, that holds church-going and Easter observance to be a proper sort of thing, a matter of conventional respectability which it is as well to recognize—for characters of this sort a different dish was served up. The ladies aforesaid retailed in this quarter a sweet little romance to the effect that Julio had broken into a convent and carried off his lady-love.

CHAPTER VII.

MARION LA CHAMPISE.

I HAVE no idea of disguising what is the reverse of beautiful in false apparel. I don't like ugly things in art any more than I do in nature. I know one of our most classical legislators sings to me thus:

"Il n'est pas de serpent, ni de monstre odieux,
Qui, par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux;"

but I don't agree with him. The objectionable is always objectionable; a deformity is always a deformity; and if a serpent may be called lovely in art, it is because it is graceful in nature, and ill deserves the ugly remarks that have been made about it since the Fall.

A child with unpleasant things all over its face is as dear to its mother as if its beauty were undisfigured. The lady doesn't like the spots, but she likes the young person behind them.

These remarks will be a proper introduction to the very plain individual whose name heads this chapter.

Loubère, as has been already stated, had procured employment at a printing-office. With his steady eye and ready intelligence he soon became a clever and accomplished workman.

But we ought to describe his master and the whole concern. Let us do so at once.

A man of a business turn of mind, whom hazard had made a priest, and who thought he should like to be a millionaire, purchased, in the Boulevard Pigale, many years before its present junction with the suburbs, an immense wooden shed, with two or three type-cases knocking about inside—the whole concern dignified with the imposing title of a printing-office. He got it for next to nothing, for the simple reason that that was its exact value. His bargain effected, he ensconced himself within, and set to work to beautify his unsightly establishment. A little corner of it was carpeted off, and partitioned into a sitting-room and office, where, with a proper patent authorizing him to publish any invaluable effusions that his own brains or those of others might bring forth, he composed in Auvergnese style (for his father was a cowkeeper of Mont Dore) the most flaming prospectus that ever issued from the press. The printing warehouse, it declared, was one of the finest in Europe; the stereotyping undeniable; most exquisite the work, on the smoothest satin paper; most faultless the impressions;

most thoroughly calculated to distance all competition, the general mode of executing work in that establishment. It was one of the wonders of the day. And then the document which bore the signature "L'abbé Laviaille," soaring higher and higher in its pretensions, had the cool assurance to invite cardinals, archbishops, and bishops—all the clergy, high and low—to pay a visit to this marvelous spot on the first possible opportunity. In fact, the only person exempted from the polite and pressing request was the Pope; an omission which, considering the gratification which the inspection promised, was scarcely civil or obliging.

In a word, Laviaille had calculated on human ignorance for procuring his million. His prospectus, at first sight, looked absurd; not so, however, after it had been exposed to gentle criticism, and forwarded to palaces and presbyteries. "It must be true," was the general judgment; "he would not have had the impudence to say all this if he only had a shed." Two or three bishops, in the space of five or six years, had managed to get lost outside the wall of the inclosure; and, through the kind assistance of cabmen, who acted as guides, pushed their way, at length, into the splendid workshops of the prospectus. They were received in solemn state. All the hands went down on their knees, according to prescribed orders; the binders and stitchers—good souls as they always are—effected numerous crossings of themselves; and their lordships took their departure enchanted with Laviaille, who had been prodigal in his professions of attachment to the pure doctrines of Rome, and had talked so incessantly during the entire visit that they had only been able to get out, "A very fine place, indeed! very fine place!" It wasn't likely that they would expose themselves, and the mistake they had made, on their return to the provinces.

Laviaille, as being a printer, found it easy to be a journalist; and his journal, the *Clerical Sentinel*, announced, with the utmost impressiveness of type and style, that on such a day the most illustrious and most reverend Bishop of . . . had paid a visit to the celebrated printing warehouses of the Boulevard Pigale.

In short, it was an undoubted, undisputed fact, a dogma to be most thoroughly received and believed by the Catholic world, that the whole earth possessed no building so fair or sumptuous as the typographical Louvre of the illustrious Laviaille.

It was not enough, however, to have got hold of the most extensive premises, and the largest collection of types and type-cases for the smallest possible outlay. The next point was to secure workmen at the lowest possible wages. And in this, too, he succeeded. He opened a friendly asylum to interdicted priests, telling them that he would give them employment, but that, as they had not been brought up to it, they could not expect such high pay as skilled and experienced workmen. In that way he gained his point. The employment was often a god-

send to the starving outlaw. True, the master was hard, exacting, and severe in reference to the due working out of every moment of the allotted working hours. Still, here was daily bread for the poor victim of ecclesiastical proscription—no small mercy, as they think who have been in peril of losing it.

Thanks to these clever contrivances, the man had made a capital start. Once set going, however, his thirst for commercial success grew rapidly. The millions did not pour in fast enough, so he tried another plan—selling masses. “Selling masses!” you exclaim; “impossible!” By no means; it’s done in many ways, of which Lavalie chose the most creditable.

You are a priest, say; he sends you books to the value of a hundred francs. You have in your sacristy two hundred engagements for masses which you can not fulfill; you send him two hundred francs, with which he pays himself for his books. At the same time, he writes to a disengaged priest, asking him to undertake the two hundred masses in his name, and he will send him one hundred francs’ worth of books. A simple system of exchange, and perfectly innocent, but at the same time leading to fabulous gains.

There remained a third method of raising the wind, too evident to escape our friend’s notice. He became a clerical banker, took care of small priestly savings, paid the regulated assessment punctually, and employed the capital in his speculation.

Having all but achieved a colossal fortune, he began to consider what honors he could manage to get. The Minister of the Interior having had the bad taste to omit him from his list of stars and crosses, and Rome having somehow forgotten to appoint him a knight of St. Gregory the Great, or the Golden Spur, he was compelled to turn his thoughts to clerical distinctions. He made overtures to more than one bishop with a view to obtaining the appointment of honorary canon, and at length succeeded. It was a grand day in his life, and consequently a trifle more agreeable to his printers. But there was farther glory in store. A worthy bishop from the Sandwich Islands, having come across the far-famed prospectus, which had penetrated even to his distant diocese, paid a visit to the celebrated premises on the occasion of a subsequent visit to Paris, and in the height of his admiration for the reams of paper which he saw piled up, and the masses of type and printers’ stores, he then and there named M. l’Abbé Lavalie vicar-general of Honolulu, his cathedral city.

From that hour the very reverend dignitary reposed under the embowering shade of his laurels; contented with himself and his work, he became an amiable sort of fellow, and relaxed the strictness of his watch over the hours of arrival and departure as observed by his priestly crew.

Loubère had come to him during the first honeymoon of his enjoyment of his new dignity.

The vicar-general of Honolulu received him very graciously and cordially.

“You are a fine fellow,” he said. “What a grenadier you might have made! And so you were a curé, were you? My good sir, you mistook your calling. You’re from the Pyrenees, you say? Bravo! They are splendid chaps, those mountaineers. I suppose you know your alphabet; because, if you do, that’s all that a compositor requires. Cheer up! Success!”

One evening Loubère was leaving the place, after a hard day’s work, in great need of air and amusement, when he observed, all huddled up on a bench, a very short woman, who sat motionless, in a strange attitude, as though she had just fainted. Looking at her very closely, he recognized a person known in the place as employed in some adjoining bleach-works, whom we will call Marion la Champise. Our mother Nature is capricious at times, and exhibits here and there strange victims of her freaks—small, timid, feeble creatures, one of whom is generally to be found in every workshop, the sickly specimen of the flock. Such was Marion among the bleachers. They were young, strong, and healthy; she was old, weak, and frail. So she was defenseless. Only hunchbacks, among her physical class, are gifted with powers of retort. She was the butt of the rest; the subject of continual laughter, the wretched victim of a thousand cruel jests.

On the day that Loubère found her shivering at the entrance to the building, like another Hagar on the confines of the wilderness, it was not merely derision that had made her heart ache, but a formal discharge from her employer. A stronger and more active hand had turned up. Compassion has little weight when interest is at stake; at least so Marion found, to her cost, as she sat there, out of place, out of money, and with nowhere to hide her head.

“What on earth are you doing there, Marion?” asked Loubère.

No answer, but a sigh—a sigh, however, most eloquent.

“Have you been dismissed?”

“Yes, sir; and there’s nothing for me now but starvation.”

“Heartless creatures! Tell me, would you like to be housekeeper?”

“That I should, sir!”

And her eyes, which were not ungentle, turned toward her eccentric friend as though she meant them to speak the thanks her lips refused to utter.

“You won’t be lodged like a princess, let me inform you. I have a kitchen, sitting-room, and an inner room where you might sleep. In the day you can employ yourself as you like; in the evening there’s the dinner to get ready. If that suits you, we’ll set off home at once.”

Marion rose silently, and, like a dog fondled by his master, followed humbly and submissively behind her new friend.

“Here you are, then, enthroned as queen,”

said Loubère, when he had reached his cinquième. "All I want you to do is to make good soup and keep out dust. I'm a bit of a bear; you won't get many words out of me; but as a proof that I respect you as an honest woman, we'll eat at the same table."

Marion began to think she was dreaming; however, she soon made herself at home. She was wonderfully clean, a very tolerable cook, a good marketer, a capital bargainer, got the best provisions at the cheapest rate, kept her master's linen in good condition—was, in a word, all that Loubère could possibly require, and more than repaid his benevolence.

A host of projects had found their way into his original brain from the time of his becoming one of the staff of the fortunate Honolulu dignitary. He was well aware that for a priest to apply to the authorities for permission to marry was an utter absurdity; yet, expelled from the duties of his office as he had been, and driven to pick up a livelihood in the best way he could, he felt strangely disposed to look out for a wife, and resented bitterly the unrighteous enactments which stood in his way.

"My dear fellow," he said, one evening, to Julio, "I have got a bit of news that will astonish you, I think."

"Well, what is it?"

"I'm going to marry."

"What a cram!"

"I am, I tell you."

"Nonsense; you're laughing. Whom, may I make bold to inquire?"

"Well, a woman, at all events."

"What family does she belong to?"

"None at all."

"Is she a foundling?"

"Yes; her name shows that."

"Ah! what may it be?"

"Marion la Champise."

"Very good; a pretty name enough. And how old is your Dulcinea?"

"Guess."

"Twenty?"

"More. Guess again."

"Thirty?"

"More yet."

"Forty?"

"More."

"Fifty?"

"A little more."

"Why, you're going to marry some stupid old woman."

"Not by any means. Old she is, I admit; but as for stupid, you're out there. She can make first-rate soup."

"Come, Loubère, that's enough; I'm tired of your rubbish. Let's talk of something else. How is the illustrious honorary canon, and vicar-general, and director of the printing establishment of the Boulevard Pigale?"

"He's the best fellow in the world, and is in first-rate health. But, Julio, nonsense apart, I want to have a bit of serious talk with you. Positively, I mean to get married."

And his tone of voice convinced his friend that he was in earnest.

"My dear boy," said Julio, "don't go and commit yourself to any such wild notion. No mayor will hear of it. More than that, too, even though you may not be exercising your functions, still I am sure you respect your office too highly to create a scandal."

"It's just because I know that the municipal authorities will have nothing to say to me that I want to bring them to the point, and compel them to explain themselves. I mean to go to all the tribunals, to the emperor himself, if need be. It's a most important question, and I should like to have it well ventilated and finally settled. It involves one higher still—the liberty of the subject. Pray believe me, Marion's fine eyes have very little to do with the matter. She is horribly ugly—more ugly than I could possibly describe. You know, old fellow, that touching memory of a crushed-out love that darkened my earlier life. It was an attachment which no one else could, by any possibility, supplant; certainly not my friend Marion—a lady little likely to enchant a much less fastidious taste than mine. However, I want to try the question *pro bono publico*, so now you understand."

"You're raving, Loubère. I may not judge you, or seek to influence you otherwise than by my advice. But, frankly, I would not spare that to divert you from this scheme of yours, which would draw public attention down upon you, and set the journals mad with excitement."

"Pretty much I mind your religious newspapers, as dumb as drums with holes in them. Who cares a button for the *Catholic Atlas*, for instance, and the other rotten old papers, that are obliged to abuse somebody in order to force themselves into passing notice. From the day they lost their chief they have been dead and buried. Ah! that was a man with whom I should like to have measured my strength, and braved his abuse. But as for the rowing of the rest of 'em, it's not worthy the honor of being named; why, I should laugh at it—simply laugh at it."

"I believe you're hardly the sort of fellow to be very much in awe of them."

"Not exactly."

"Well, then, if you mean to persist in your wild idea—which I hope is not your purpose—you ought first to write to Rome, and apply to the Pope to absolve you from your vow of celibacy. That's your duty as a priest."

"My dear Julio, I'm no longer a priest. Since I have left Rome, I've seen too much of the priesthood to retain much respect for it, or much opinion of its regard for discipline. With reference to the faith, all I can say is, you are a lucky fellow to have preserved it in your own breast. As for me, it has either left me, or fearfully lessened its hold upon me. All things considered, I am thankful to be out of the whole concern. It's a horrible thing to teach others, and doubt at the same time what you teach."

"What, Loubère? Do you mean to tell me

that if you were called once more to unfold the Gospel of Christ to the poor and unlettered, you would begin by questioning its truth?"

"No, no, dear Julio—a thousand times no. It's not with reference to the Gospel that I raise the doubt, but with reference to human additions to it. However, face to face with the convictions of a man like yourself, my skepticism recoils. Possibly, one day I shall find out how to separate the false from the true, the human from the divine, and in this task you're the only man who can help me. At present, however, I have other fish to fry. As to appealing to Rome, that's your business; as a journalist, you can show up, in proper style, in your columns, the evils of the present system, while I confine my attention to the civil tribunals. We must have this question settled in the heart of Paris, that it may go through the world. You understand that my personal interest in the matter is merely nominal. But, if I can but manage to start the idea, it will travel with its own velocity, while, by thus anticipating the future, and preparing the way to a better and happier state of Church discipline, I shall feel that I have acted wisely and well."

"You understand, Loubère, I agree with you thoroughly on this question. But do you think it time yet to work it?"

"To work it—yes. To settle it—no. You sow wheat in November, and wait seven months before reaping it. Just so in human life—ages are made up of months. Cast the thought into the furrow of the future, it will have fruitful produce in God's good time."

The two friends parted, and Julio told Louise of Loubère's eccentric project.

"He is mad," she said. "Poor fellow!"

"A very generous madness, then," he answered. "He was just as mad when he went to Rome, and worked night and day spending his last sou in his efforts to set me free. All liberators are mad, I suppose. But we may well love and bless them, whether they are or no."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OFFICIATING DEACON.

ANY one writing the biographies of the successive officiating deacons in the churches of Paris during the last thirty years would find that he had undertaken a singular task. As the spectator sees the curé ascend the altar steps on a high festival day, with two white-haired priests on either side of him, arrayed in golden dalmatics as gorgeous as his own chasuble, he realizes only the distinguished pastor of a church like St. Roch or the Madeleine present to exercise the highest functions of his ministry, and attended by two clerical dignitaries scarcely less exalted than himself. Vain delusion! they are poor wretches who won't get any thing to eat on Sunday till after one o'clock mass, and on week days not till noon.

Ah! fair lady, addicted to late hours, you little think that, in order to contrive a mass for you on Sundays, and even in the week, at a time which may fall in with your arrangements, your indolence, your nights spent in party-going, those miserable slaves will have to endure the tortures of semi-starvation. Were I a woman, I would never set my foot in a church at such a service; my heart would ache too much from the thought of the suffering I should occasion, while my conscience would tell me that my indolent selfishness was an offense to God.

Sometimes these officiating deacons are poor priests, banished for their political opinions—Poles seeking an asylum among their French brethren; or Spaniards involved in difficulties at home, arising from various sources, and driven to earn their bread in another country; or ill-starred victims of Jesuit animosity. Once a scholar of highest repute and European celebrity quitted the society, and became, and to this day continues to be, one of these humble clergy in a Paris church. The companion of Arago and Humboldt is destined yet to die in his obscure retreat, in spite of the honor that he brings to the cloth by his scientific publications.

As a rule, they are men of very considerable intellectual attainments and lofty aspirations; men who have been compromised by a rash utterance of their sentiments or involved in a theological dispute; inflexible characters, ill disposed to bow before some imperious dignitary; writers who have written too boldly, or scribblers (at times) who have bothered the world to death with their scribbling; with various other classes and characters. Such men, after having been well scolded and abused, and duly sent off to a penitential retreat, turn up eventually in this all but menial office, and may be seen sweeping sacristies in long black gowns, assisting at innumerable ceremonies, and supplying generally any chance vacancy that may occur in any particular place on any particular occasion.

Such is the life they are doomed to live—now arrayed in cloth of gold, velvet, moiré antique, or rich brodered vestments; now feeding on the scantiest possible allowance capable of sustaining life, yet the largest their wretched pittance enables them to procure.

The seminary lad, duly ordained and licensed as a parish curate, is their superior, veterans though they are. He has a prospect of promotion—of being second curate one day, then first, and some time or other a dignitary of the Church. The officiating deacons, on the other hand, see their hopes of advancement diminish the older they grow. They quit, perhaps, the splendors of the Madeleine or St. Clotilde for the humbler shrine of La Villette, Grenelle, or even Mont Rouge, while ere long their despised ashes will moulder with those of the lowest outcasts in a common grave at Ivry or Clichy-la-Garenne.

They are, indeed, greatly to be pitied, though occasionally there are among them men qualified for no worthier post, or others, utterly indifferent to their lot, and willing to be forgotten,

who can not possibly interest any body, because they take no interest in themselves, and are entirely destitute of every thing approaching to self-respect.

It will be in the reader's recollection that the Archbishop of Paris had nominated Julio second chaplain of the Lycée of St. Louis. M. de Baraminos, however, yielding to the pressure that was brought to bear upon him from all sides, urged so strongly one morning at the council table the dissatisfaction this appointment had created in the religious world, that the cardinal was thoroughly alarmed. It is not easy to defy the opinion of one's friends; to do so requires no little moral courage.

"Then where shall I put him?" said his eminence. "I must do something for him; he's not a bad priest, after all."

To which the promoter, who had been well tutored by the Jesuits, briskly replied that he thought it would be honor enough to make him an officiating deacon.

"Well, so be it: settle the matter in that way for the present; I'll see what more I can do for him by-and-by."

The same day an official notification was sent to Julio, at the Rue de la Barouillière, to the following effect:

"M. L'ABBE,—An unfavorable report of your antecedents having reached the archbishop, his eminence feels reluctantly compelled to cancel his recent appointment, made on the strength of the too partial recommendation of the Bishop of ———, whom you have probably misled as to your true character. You are appointed officiating deacon in the church of Notre-Dame des Champs; and his eminence desires you to understand that this is the only post to which he has in his power to nominate you.

"I ought not to conceal from you that even this is a favor, and a favor which will be immediately withdrawn, with all power to officiate in the diocese, should you venture to lay yourself open to any farther reproach.

(Signed, etc.) "DE BARAMINOS, V.G.,
"Promoter."

Julio was not at all surprised by the contents of this letter, nor did he feel, on receiving it, the slightest regret or indignation. Louise, however, cried bitterly, thoroughly understanding what had led to this new persecution.

"Don't trouble yourself about them, dearest," he said; "they are but the instruments of a merciful Providence, after all. The bruised grape doesn't rail against the wine-press. We profess to be Christians; let us exhibit a real Christian spirit."

"You are brave indeed, Julio, to submit so cheerfully to such utter degradation."

"It is that very abasement that makes us strong, Louise. The oak bough springs up with greater vigor to the skies after having been violently held down. The more the bow is bent, the farther flies the arrow."

"That's all very pretty; and I suppose it's

quite right and proper to say it, by way of consolation; but what I wish to observe is, that if I were a man—especially if I were the Abbé de la Clavière—I'd see them far enough before I'd go and be an officiating deacon at that little wooden shed, dignified as the Church of Notre-Dame des Champs."

"The abode of our Savior at Nazareth was humbler than that, Louise. What matters it in God's sight whether I am Pope, archbishop, or deacon? I am but an officiating minister in each case, only the last position is less likely to make me proud and conceited than the other two; that's all the difference. My own dear sister, you are trying to lead your brother into temptation, though you don't know it."

Louise smiled.

"Well, I suppose you are right," she said; "I am a woman, and so I have a woman's spirit. He must be great who is willing to be small."

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISCUSSIONS AT ST. EUSTACE.

AMONG the warmest admirers of Julio's talents and ability was a M. de Leich, originally a barrister of the Imperial Court at T——. Thanks to considerable interest, he had met with rapid promotion, and, at the time of Julio's arrival in Paris, belonged to the Court of Cassation in that city.

He received our hero very warmly, though he almost failed to recognize in him the young priest who had achieved such a brilliant reputation in his early home, so effectually had sorrow wrought upon him, like the hot sun upon the autumn grapes. He had grown old and grave; his original impulsiveness had mellowed down; his spirit had been chastened and purified in the furnace of affliction.

M. de Leich soon felt a growing esteem for him, and the two became intimate friends. He often took him home with him to a charming country residence which he had built between Courbevoie and Puteaux. Scarcely a Sunday passed but Julio, after escorting his sister to Madame de Tourabel's, in the Faubourg St. Honoré, indulged his passionate love of rural scenery in this pleasant retreat.

The magistrate was worthy, in the highest sense of the term: he was an earnest, upright Christian. His religious opinions were calm and tolerant—completely devoid of that rancorous bigotry which identifies love to God with hatred toward those who differ from the bigot. His wealth and position invested him with considerable importance; and as his house was in the Rue du Jour, near the church of St. Eustace, he had been at once appointed one of the vestrymen of his parish.

It was now 1861, and the Advent festival was fast approaching. The importance which Parisians attach to the preaching on great occasions, such as Advent and Lent, especially in church-

es like St. Roch, St. Sulpice, the Madeleine, and St. Eustace, is well known. Three or four years back, an able Dominican had been appointed to preach at St. Eustace on the present occasion. Meanwhile, M. de Leich was extremely anxious to see Julio in one of the more conspicuous pulpits of the city, and, with that view, spoke to the curé of his church on the subject. There was some little difficulty in starting: it was a bold measure to take up a man who had been proceeded against by the most renowned of the Roman orders, and whom the archbishop himself had appointed to the humblest post in the diocese. However, M. de Leich managed to dispose of every scruple as it arose, and succeeded in getting Julio appointed to preach at St. Eustace, during Advent, every Thursday evening, leaving the Sunday open to the Dominican. It was agreed between the three that the arrangement should be kept a profound secret till the lectures commenced, in order to avoid, as long as possible, the excitement which it would occasion in ultramontane circles. They were prudent enough, also, to omit Julio's name from the notice on the church door, announcing the day and hour when the series would begin, contenting themselves with a simple intimation that "discussions, intended especially for men, would take place every Thursday at the parish church during the coming Advent, at eight o'clock in the evening."

The Abbé Denis, however, who was "told off" as Julio's body-guard, and who watched him incessantly, contrived, in some inscrutable way, to ascertain, about eight or ten days before the time, that these discussions were to be conducted by the great enemy of the Jesuits. It will be easy to imagine the dismay which the news created in that illustrious fraternity. It spread with wonderful rapidity. "That object of universal reprobation, a runaway convict, was about to exhibit his talents in one of the most celebrated pulpits in Paris, and eclipse the Jesuit star in Notre Dame!" At first no one believed it. But as soon as it was ascertained beyond all doubt that on the first Thursday in Advent this most objectionable individual had actually held forth to the unanimous and enthusiastic delight of a select audience, recruited, through M. de Leich's exertions, from among magistrates, professors, and literary men, the fury of the opposition party knew no bounds.

The question suggested itself at once, What was to be done? It was resolved to appeal to the archbishop; to make a very grievous and very ferocious lamentation, and to spread, from pole to pole, the tidings of this unparalleled effrontery.

The cardinal was literally besieged with visitors. They came in shoals, from duchesses and marchionesses to priests of every order under the sun. Of course, the Jesuits were in full force. His eminence and his vicars-general grew weary of their life.

The only answer the memorialists obtained was to the effect that the curés of Paris had

possessed, from time immemorial, the right of choosing their preachers at Advent and Lent, of course submitting their choice to the archbishop; that the curé of St. Eustace had satisfied this form in reference to the Dominican whom he had selected for that occasion; that his eminence had no jurisdiction over any arrangements apart from the principal ministration; and, lastly, that the Abbé Julio, being neither suspended nor interdicted by his bishop, could not possibly be refused the right to exercise his ministerial functions.

This reply, of course, was far from satisfactory to the zealous petitioners. They went so far as to murmur against the decision arrived at, and, if report is to be believed, even insulted one of the archiepiscopal secretaries by telling him that there was an authority at Rome higher than that of any archbishop, and that to it they meant to appeal, as justice had been denied them at the palace. To which piece of impertinence the secretary replied with quiet firmness. He assured them that they were mistaken in their views; that the Pope was not Archbishop of Paris, and had nothing to do with the administration of dioceses, except in extreme cases of general appeal.

It was, indeed, a thing to be well cried about, to see the great bulk of the Paris clergy still infected with the heresy of Gallicanism; for so the ultramontane writers and journalists styled the doctrines which had been held by Bossuet, Luzerne, Frayssinous, Cheverus, Affre, and Sibour, and, in short, by almost all the French bishops up to the present hour.

Meanwhile the St. Eustace discussions went on, to the great distress of the Jesuit partisans, who had reckoned upon the timidity of the archbishop. They became famous, and recalled the palmiest days of Lacordaire at Notre Dame, before that illustrious orator sullied his reputation by assuming the robe of St. Dominic so inseparably associated with the horrors of the Inquisition.

True, it was the thoughtful philosopher who, in that way, sought for a protecting shelter while he matured and divulged his views. What he dared not say as the abbé he might venture on as a Dominican. Hence the step which so many have regretted.

On the other hand, the *Catholic Liberal* created a positive storm in the ultramontane world. Ably written, and in full knowledge of the needs of the Church, it reviewed and demolished the fallacious theories of the bigoted party. At once cutting and quiet in style, and opposing to impassioned sophisms calm and irresistible logic, it lashed, day after day, the unhappy advocates of the tiara, and consoled the large majority who felt keenly the actual degradation which the Church was undergoing.

Of course, the sectarian foes plotted, with unremitting eagerness, to ruin the journalist. They knew well that, having lost that able chief, who was the only man likely to give a name and reputation to their press, they had no one

left to cope with Julio ; so they prevailed upon two or three of the bishops in the South to forbid their clergy, by letters, which were carefully posted up in Paris, to take in, or in any way patronize the *Catholic Liberal*. They tried their utmost to get it into the Prohibitory Index, and contrived to obtain an order interdicting its admission into the Roman States, lest it should bring with it the Gallican infection.

Nor did the illustrious Denis rest on his oars. His proceedings were of another character altogether. He enrolled a few miserable creatures, kept alive by charity, and contrived a scheme which, by the notoriety it would occasion, was to force the archbishop to prohibit the discussions.

On the Thursday of the second week of Advent (the season begins on All Saints' Day), he reached the church in good time, accompanied by about one hundred men, whom he distributed in groups to the best advantage, through the nave and aisles. They had been well instructed in what they were to do. Plied with plenty of wine, at his expense, from the wine-stores round the church, these somewhat original actors prepared for a demonstration, encouraged by the promise of a five-franc piece if the thing went off well. Accordingly, as soon as Julio commenced, they joined in with a violent cough, began to talk loud enough to drown his voice, and soon succeeded in creating a disturbance ; some of them raising the cry, "Down with that man," while others shouted, "Success to the orator," the object being to feign a struggle between the preacher's friends and opponents. The confusion was terrible. In France, when any shouting is going on, every one shouts—honest men and scamps alike. Julio, having made a vain attempt to silence the throng, was compelled to leave the pulpit. The efforts of Denis were crowned with success.

The disturbance, which created immense excitement, was marvelously explained by the ultramontanists. Rome was informed that Julio had uttered such monstrous sentiments that the congregation rose as one man, and refused to hear any more of his blasphemies ; that he had not only railed against the temporal power of the Pope, but also abused the spiritual. The faction against him became so powerful from that hour, that the archbishop, dreading any farther scenes of a similar character, reluctantly interfered. He sent for the curé of St. Eustace, and, while he gave a willing and generous testimony of his full belief in Julio's orthodoxy, represented the undesirableness of continuing the discussions, and requested him to announce that they would no longer be held.

CHAPTER X.

AN EVENING PARTY AT MADAME DE TOURABEL'S.

ON reaching Paris, Julio had written to Verdelon, telling him of Louise's and his own res-

cue. A reply had come, which the writer imagined to be couched in very affectionate terms, but which was, in reality, full of unmeaning phrases, utterly devoid of heart or interest, and the true character of which Louise detected at once. It was the final death-blow to her unhappy love, and left her resolved from that day forward to devote herself entirely to promoting her brother's happiness. To identify herself with him more and more, to develop her own intelligence by contact with his, to engage in steady reading that she might help him in his work—such was her plan, and she pursued it eagerly.

One day, however, Madame de Tourabel told her, in utter ignorance of the interest which the news would create, that Verdelon was married. Up to that moment she had fancied she was free from her infatuation. On hearing the tidings, however, she became conscious of a secret hope that had been lurking within her breast, as though unwilling to depart, and which, even in the presence of that decisive intelligence, she found it hard to expel without severe suffering.

Moreover, the constant persecution and slanderous reports which were adopted against her brother had a most distressing effect upon herself. She was a prey to unceasing suffering of mind, and her health declined daily. The affair at St. Eustace was a terrible shock to her, and even Julio himself felt it very keenly, detecting the hateful conspiracy out of which it had sprung.

On the following Sunday, while he was dining at Puteaux with his friend M. de Leich, Louise spent the evening in the Faubourg St. Honoré. The party was small, but among the arrivals were "M. and Madame de Verdelon ;" for our friend Augustus had signalized his marriage by adopting this little ornamental prefix to his family name.

Louise started up as though she had been struck by a thunderbolt. She hadn't the faintest idea that "the happy couple" were in Paris. Pale and trembling, she sank back again into her easy-chair, covering her face with her hands to hide her confusion.

"How do you do, cousin ?" said the baroness to the newly-married wife.

The customary forms of politeness were interchanged. Madame de Verdelon was one of the De Tourabel family. She was an only daughter, and had brought two millions in landed property to the ambitious barrister. The quondam friend of Julio, and advocate of his interests in opposition to the Jesuits, had become their most enthusiastic friend. They had given him a wealthy wife, it is true ; but when ambition has induced a man to trample out an honorable love, and fling from him the heart he had won, what farther change in his mind and feelings is it not capable of effecting !

Madame de Tourabel went through the various introductions requisite.

"Mademoiselle Julio de la Clavière," she said, pointing to Louise.

"Ah! exactly. I've heard of her," said the young lady, in an embarrassed tone of voice.

Verdelon maintained his cheerful and composed demeanor as a happy bridegroom with that ease and success which his profession had taught him to assume in every position of perplexity. Men like him are as much masters of the situation in the drawing-room as in the assize court.

Louise, however, had not had his advantages. No school had taught her how to disguise her feelings and play the hypocrite. She made a quiet inclination of her head, took leave of her hostess, and went home.

"Mademoiselle de la Clavière seems ill," said the baroness, as soon as the door had closed. "I shall send and inquire after her to-morrow. She comes from Languedoc—a fellow-countrywoman of yours, by the way," she added, addressing herself to Verdelon.

"Yes; I knew her brother," was his reply. "Indeed, I pleaded for him once against the Jesuits in an unfortunate affair, which the recollection of early friendship induced me to take up; as it was a hopeless case, of course I lost it."

"He is a most talented man," said the baroness.

"Yes, he is clever—got the gift of the gab."

"A very disagreeable thing has just happened to him at St. Eustace."

"So I understand; it will do him considerable harm."

At that moment the Countess de Vezère, the penitent of De Baraminos, and the warm partisan of the Jesuits, entered the room.

"We were speaking of the sad affair at St. Eustace," said Madame de Tourabel, continuing the conversation.

"A disgraceful affair, rather," rejoined the countess; "there never was such a scandal in a Paris church before. But his eminence is so lenient—weak, one might almost say. He allows too much latitude to his clergy, and the consequence is, they are everlastingly getting into scrapes, crying up Gallicanism, and patronizing the enemies of the Church and Pope. They'll soon come to call his Holiness M. de Rome, as an archbishop designated him in the last century. The priests here are not in good repute in the Eternal City."

"You surprise me, countess. I fancied that the French clergy ranked high in the Pope's estimation."

"The French clergy—yes, because they are devoted to his interests; but not those in Paris, otherwise there wouldn't have been a curé among them ready to encourage an enemy of Rome and the Jesuits like Julio de la Clavière."

"Stay, stay, countess; I never heard the abbé speak otherwise than most respectfully of the Holy Father, and I know he is greatly distressed at his painful and critical position."

"He is against the temporal power, for all that; so he's an enemy of the Pope, and no true priest."

"I can't admit that. I have a great respect for him, and am warmly attached to his sister."

"My dear baroness, you are kind-heartedness itself, but you have been deceived. Men of his stamp never show themselves in their true colors to persons like yourself. But I do assure you that you are the only person in respectable society whom I ever heard speak a word in his favor."

"Why, you don't even know the man. I'll introduce him to you one of these days."

"Horror of horrors! I should look upon it as high treason," said the countess, laughing; then, resuming her previous gravity, added, "I don't know him, you say; no, thank God I don't, but Rome does. He has a tolerably wide-spread reputation. What do you think of his breaking into a nunnery? an exploit worthy of Garibaldi, that. What have you got to say of his connection with revolutionary agents at Rome, the conspirators who got him out of his dungeon? Can you venture to defend his furious article against the temporal power? 'Well known,' indeed—I should just think he was. Why, my dear friend, you have espoused a bad cause in undertaking his defense. Your kind heart is your best excuse; but it does not do to encourage free-thinkers, for all that."

"I don't encourage him. At the same time, he seems to me so sensible and moderate in his views, in which you must acknowledge that he has some excuse in the violent reaction against our government on the part of the authorities at Rome."

"Then our government should give back to the Pope what has been plundered from him. It can do it, and it ought to do it. Look here, my dear friend, it's not the thing to trifle with principles: you're far too indulgent. Give up this brother and sister. She's almost as bad as he is. What was she doing in Italy?"

"What was she doing? Don't you know the history of that business? Why, she was kidnapped."

"Kidnapped! ridiculous. Who on earth got you to believe that vile fiction? You've been very incorrectly informed, to say the least of it."

"Quite mistaken. However, I'll give in about the brother. Perhaps you're right in his case. I find him myself a little too advanced in his ideas."

"He's another Passaglia—a Gavazzi."

"Be it so, if you like; but his sister I will stand up for. She is a dear girl, as you would say if you knew her. So gentle, and yet so clever."

"Clever enough, I believe you. She writes in her brother's paper, I understand. You may rely upon it, she's as bad as he is. All original thinkers are more or less dangerous. Besides that, I know enough against the young lady to make me indifferent to the honor of her acquaintance. Stick to the regular clergy; they are the only body that have real priests among them. Every departure from the pious traditions of days gone by is unsafe. It was a long

time before I found out this, for I had my little leanings, myself, toward the new ideas, as they are called; but they have all been dispelled by the holy Jesuits, whom I have constantly met at my mother's. The fact is, their cause ought to be exclusively espoused. They are the centre and support of the ecclesiastical arch; the complete triumph of their power will be the salvation of the Church. Let me tell you, between ourselves, I have left the Abbé de Baraminos altogether. He is too Gallican for my fancy; besides which, he's one of the seculars, and they know nothing about the guidance of souls."

"I've heard it whispered, from time to time, that your friends are slightly ambitious."

"Ambitious, my dear creature! Yes, ambitions for the honor of the Pope, the maintenance of his rights, and the glory of God. As far as they themselves are concerned, they haven't a single worldly desire."

"People are afraid of them."

"Because slanderous tongues, an unprincipled press, and vicious literature have so misrepresented and calumniated them."

"Well, I must acknowledge that."

And, turning to Verdalon, she asked him whether they hadn't plenty of Jesuits at T——.

"Yes—great numbers. They have a splendid college there."

"What an immense deal of good they do—don't they?" appealed the countess.

"They do, indeed, madame."

As the countess was taking her leave, she said to her friend, in a whisper,

"Don't get mixed up with these two—that's a dear creature. I am only advising you for your good. The fact is, our people are surprised at you. You'll finish up with getting the cold shoulder, and displeasing your numerous friends."

This little speech did its work. It was a quiet hint to Madame de Tourabel to withdraw her countenance from the enemies of the Jesuits.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS.

THE priest-workman in the Boulevard Pigale had followed up his singular design. He took good care to have it thoroughly understood that he was a priest when he left his marriage papers at the Mairie. Meanwhile the mayor had been enlightened as to the whole affair; and on the day that Loubère presented himself in his Sunday best, with a select few from the printing-shop as witnesses, and the blushing beauty hanging on his arm, the civil authority declined to proceed in the matter, to the great disgust of the bride, who looked at the whole affair as thoroughly serious.

This was just what the bridegroom wanted. He applied for the refusal in writing, and, with this document in his possession, proceeded to lodge his appeal at the court of the Seine.

While the necessary preliminary measures were being taken, and intense excitement was being aroused in the printing-shop, Loubère, who was anxious to render the proceedings as conducive as possible to the interest he had at heart, forwarded a communication to Julio for insertion in his journal, accompanied by the following note:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I inclose a letter which please publish in your columns without delay. I will hold myself responsible for its contents by putting my name to it, so all you have to do is to give it a prominent place. I'm sure you won't refuse me.

"Ever yours,

LOUBÈRE."

"To the Editor of the CATHOLIC LIBERAL.

"SIR,—I am a priest of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, and have officiated in the dioceses of Chambéry and T——. For reasons more political than religious, and connected with the interminable question of the papal sovereignty, the Archbishop of Chambéry has thought fit to withdraw my license. Driven out of the priesthood, I have been compelled to cast about for means of obtaining a livelihood. My master began His life in a workshop, and closed it in the discharge of His office. I commenced mine in the ministry, and end it in the shop. I don't complain of my lot—a lot dignified by Him whom I serve, and rendered honorable by many of His servants, who have wrought with their hands in their own support while they ministered to others. So I am in good company, and I am almost inclined to believe that the Church will scarcely recover her ancient strength except by returning to her ancient self-denial.

"Before that happy consummation arrives—a consummation which I never hope to witness myself—I wish to point out to your readers a glaring injustice of which I, and many like me, are the victims.

"I am not going to inquire whether the bishops who have deprived myself and others of our ministerial rights can be justified in what they have done; I have no intention of raising the question whether or not they have acted under passionate excitement; whether they have brought to bear on our case all that thoughtful consideration which justice and charity require; nor yet whether they have, or have not, observed the canonical laws intended from the earliest times to protect the weak against the strong. Indeed, that economy has disappeared: they are omnipotent now, and they have used their omnipotence against us. I am even willing to admit, for argument's sake, that they are right in what they have done, and that we have been very properly deprived of our licenses.

"But, this being the case, is it not unreasonable to continue depriving us of a civil and social right, refused in the first instance the better to qualify us for undertaking duties which we are no longer permitted to discharge?

"Why is the Church less liberal to us who are now deprived of our functions, than she is

to Catholic priests in Greece, to the priests of Mount Lebanon, and the various Eastern communions in allegiance to the Pope, whom she permits to marry, but retains in office?

"I am not going to discuss here the advantages which would accrue to the Church from the entire abolition of celibacy, nor am I going to revert to the numerous evil results, as recorded in episcopal registers, of this most objectionable restriction. I will suppose that it works admirably in every case but ours. Yet are we the less Christians, children of the Church, because we are debarred from exercising the office which once belonged to us? Though they strip us of the honors of the priesthood, they can not take away our orders, for they declare that they are indestructible. Meanwhile, the vow of celibacy is of an entirely different character. Not even the highest ecclesiastical authority can divest us of what is in its essence sacramental, but nothing could be easier than to restore us our rights as citizens after depriving us, whether justly or unjustly, of our rights as priests.

"The present state of things is nothing short of a disgrace to Catholicism. Men who have been driven out of their ministerial position, and, consequently, from the guardianship of ecclesiastical authority, contract alliances which the state refuses to recognize, and the offspring of which are denied the rights of birth, and have no legal claim to their parents' property. I ask, is this just or right?

"Moreover, it is well known that out of every hundred interdicted priests there are ninety-five whose morals are irreproachable, but who have been guilty of what is termed insubordination in evincing political opinions of too developed a character. Priests know well that they have only got to cringe to their bishop, pull devotedly in his boat, and display enthusiastic zeal on special occasions, and their private characters are safe from too curious scrutiny. Our duty, therefore, is to approach the sovereign pontiff, whose benevolence and justice are so conspicuous, with the prayer that he would interest himself in these men, whose case is so deserving of his sympathy.

"Failing a general measure, the notoriety of which might, perhaps, be inexpedient, wouldn't it be well if the bishops of the more important dioceses—Paris, for instance, the refuge of the greater number of these interdicted priests—were to take the initiative by applying privately to Rome for a dispensation in such cases under such circumstances?

"It is a right the Popes have always claimed and constantly exercised. There are many instances in by-gone times in which scions of noble families, whose eldest brothers have died without issue, they themselves being priests, have applied for permission to secularize themselves by marriage, in order that they might hand down their princely name and fortune. We are only outcasts of the lowest order, it is true, but our souls are as precious in God's sight as those of princes and patricians. We ought to inspire the same interest in bishops sprung from our or-

der, and who, moreover, are incessantly talking of the perfect equality of all men before God. Let me ask, as a religious question, is it of more importance that high-born families should be perpetuated than that a multitude of inoffensive children should obtain their rights of birth?

"I feel that I have handled this most important subject very imperfectly. I can only add my earnest conviction that it is high time that the scandal was abolished. The greater the number of priests allowed to resume their position in society and to contract marriage, the greater will be the respect accorded to those who, declining the offered permission, retain their functions and their vows together.

"No one is better qualified than yourself, sir, to espouse the cause of this unfortunate class, and to help them, if possible, toward the attainment of their object. No slight proof of this interest on your part will be afforded by your insertion of this letter in your generous columns. To intercede for us is to perform a truly charitable action. Receive, etc.,

"LOUBÈRE, an ex-priest."

The letter, though impulsively, was carefully written, and reflected in no way on Rome or the episcopate. Julio hesitated for a long time before publishing it; he admitted all its statements, but doubted the expediency of raising a fresh question in the presence of so many others of the highest importance. And then the point itself—Would it not be better, he thought, to have it argued calmly and dispassionately, if it was to be brought forward, than that it should be violently discussed by men prejudiced on either side, the one faction thirsting after a forward movement, heedless of any overthrow that might result from obtaining it, the other as anxious to go back to the bigoted teaching and system of Gregory VII.? It was evidently a useless struggle.

However, the obligations he was under to Loubère, who, after all, merely contributed his production in the character of a correspondent for whose sentiments he was not responsible, decided him. The letter was inserted.

Of course there was a terrible hubbub, the whole fury of which was condensed in the one sentence,

"So the *Catholic Liberal* demands the marriage of priests."

The *Catholic Atlas* had a paragraph to the effect that the whole thing was a sham; that the sentiments of the letter were in reality those of the editor, disguised in that form, and subscribed with a fictitious name from prudential motives.

Meanwhile the incident itself served as a pretext for new insults. Anonymous letters were poured down upon Julio in a continuous shower, conceived in terms equally veracious and polite. Many of them were signed with initial letters, followed by the word "priest."

"Ah! my fine fellows," said Loubère, as he read this latter collection, "you, at all events,

stand in good need of being absolved from vows which you have yourselves shaken off. I have always remarked that, in clerical meetings, the most blameless priests have been those most eager in advocating a change in this law, while the others have invariably protested, thinking, by that means, to protect their individual reputation from too curious scrutiny. Oh, if their bishops were only to show them up!"

The archbishop, of course, came in for his share of violent expostulation. The most vehement remonstrances were addressed to him from all parts of France, coupled with the most energetic protests against a paper whose principles were scandalizing the Catholic world.

CHAPTER XII.

LOUBÈRE PLEADS.

THE great question of the marriage of the priests, which Loubère had brought before the civil court of the Seine, was heard amid the greatest excitement and interest. One of the most conspicuous members of the bar in Paris ranged himself on the side of liberty. He had got up various facts from the annals of the past, and showed how the secret marriages of priests continued up to the time of the Middle Ages. Arguing the question on all sides, and gathering the inferences suggested by the multitudinous evidence which he had collected, he demonstrated that the law of celibacy was inexpedient, and, as regarded the objects entertained in its institution, an utter fallacy.

Next came Loubère, on the moral and religious aspect of the question: his wild, earnest eloquence told powerfully in the crowded court.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I should not have been so rash as to undertake to plead before you, after the brilliant address you have just heard, had I not felt that my position puts into my mouth arguments which no other could so effectually employ, because no one else can feel so acutely the injustice of the system against which this protest is entered.

"It has been shown to you that, under a social economy which, since the year 1789, has been proclaiming universal liberty, there has ever been one exception to this general rule. The convict is released from the hulks, and allowed to set up for himself, and to gather round him a family circle; the brigand—ay, and even the murderer, at times—have had conceded to them the same privilege; it has been reserved for authority to announce, in the presence of a people justly proud of their liberties, that to the priest, and the priest alone, this boon shall never be granted.

"The fact being admitted by the first tribunal in the most civilized town in the world, what more is requisite to prove the injustice of which we complain?

"But there are other considerations which I wish to bring before you.

"The superior courts, in interdicting the priest from marriage, imagined that they were furthering the cause of religion and preventing the occurrence of possible scandals in the bosom of the Church.

"Gentlemen, this is a clever delusion, well calculated to work its way in excitable temperaments. Remember that there are wide countries where Catholicism is advancing daily, but where, at the same time, the marriage of priests is allowed. I might mention the United States, and the Protestant kingdoms of Europe, more especially England. Does the priest avail himself of his privilege in these free countries, and abandon his ministry? By no means; he remains true to his voluntary vow, while his constancy secures him the most unfeigned respect. And if you tell me that, in the event of this point being carried, France would be deluged with a polluted flood of men repudiating the priesthood, I answer, so much the better. The heaven will be purged away. What is left behind will be pure and good, and will merit and receive the greater reverence. Thus Catholicism will gain instead of lose, and the last vestiges of intolerance will be removed.

"But I go still farther.

"We have become so accustomed in France to the ignorant persuasion, if I may be allowed the expression, that celibacy among the clergy is indispensable, that any interference with the idea we regard as simply preposterous. 'All very well for the Protestant clergy to marry,' is a common remark; 'but the Catholic priest, who is required to confess, must remain single.' Such is the traditional notion; a more unsound one could not be imagined.

"Is it possible that those who hold to this belief are ignorant that there are conspicuous sections of English Catholics who are not by any means bound by this restriction? quite the contrary; whose priests are positively compelled to marry, while they receive at the same time, with the hearty consent of the faithful, customary confessions? Indeed, experience proves that men who know something of life, and have had some little practical experience of its ways, are better adapted for spiritual guidance than mere untutored neophytes or ignorant bachelor recluses.

"These things being so—and their truth can not be disputed—why, I ask, why does human law persist in an obstinate opposition to this most righteous demand?

"Gentlemen, you are maintaining a wretched prejudice, a miserable, practical fallacy in the world. You give force to the most weighty objections ever urged against the clergy. Were priests not hindered from marriage, they would marry in shoals. This prejudice is universal; and nothing will weaken its hold on the popular mind except an irresistible testimony supplied by facts. As soon as it is announced that the municipal authorities are ready to sanction the civil marriage of the clergy, it will be at once fully admitted that those who keep back

are all that they profess to be, and their fidelity to their original vow will be thoroughly appreciated.

"Gentlemen, we Frenchmen are far more under the dominion of Mediævalism than is generally supposed, and the crisis of 1789 has but very imperfectly emancipated us. We have, it is true, proclaimed full liberty for all denominations; and the Church has none but spiritual weapons now to compel us to fidelity to our fathers' faith. The secular arm has ceased to uplift itself in aid of any who would force down belief. There were those who once raised the shout, 'Believe or die—turn or burn;' but they are gone, and their tyranny has perished with them. Yet, though the civil power refuses to repeat so cruel an injustice—though it will not kill the body, it kills the soul, for it drives into profligacy and excess by an unrighteous enactment—it compels thousands of men to be immoral by depriving them of their only hope of being moral.

"Gentlemen, I have done. It is for you to pronounce your verdict. Remember that, in this matter, you are bound by no legal enactment in the code. The letter from the Minister of Worship, dated January 14, 1806, can not possibly be regarded as having the force of law: it was but a provision for the moment—the expression of an individual judgment, in no way referring to the future. Every citizen has a full right to insist on the repeal of a requirement opposed to moral interests. In this case, however, you are not called upon to deal with civil enactments, but only with religious discipline. If you insist, however, on maintaining that discipline as it stands, be consistent and go farther. Give in your various municipal registers to the ecclesiastical authorities—compel Catholics to live as Catholics should. Pass laws enjoining them, under pain of death, to confess regularly, and to communicate at Easter. Either submit body and soul to the yoke of bondage, or break it altogether."

He sat down applauded; but his eloquence and arguments were equally useless. The tribunal heard and smiled, and simply and utterly rejected his application.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BROKEN TIE.

THE underhand insinuations of the Countess of Vezère had told upon the Baroness de Tourabel. She saw at once that she must choose between her own society, whose praise or blame were of such moment in her estimation, and her sweet friend Louise, who had so effectually attracted and secured her affection.

As she loved her and respected Julio, the struggle was long and bitter. Moreover, she was not a little influenced by her woman's pride. Naturally her feelings were lofty and honorable, and she resented this idea of yielding a coward-

ly deference to the imperious dictates of society, succumbing to its prejudices and espousing its animosities. She saw that in thus giving way she was virtually destroying her liberty of thought and action; that she was bidding adieu to the world of noble and generous progress, and was about to sink back, at the close of her life, into an indolent supineness, an idiotic veneration of the past, and a pitiful dislike of all modern efforts to open, for present and future ages, the golden gates of progress.

Moreover, the influence of the brother and sister had not been lost upon her; and of this she was conscious. Under their teaching, the horizon of her mental view had broadened. She was charitable, as all compassionate women of wealth and benevolence always are, but nothing more. Meanwhile, this question of charity, in its different bearings, had been closely studied by Louise since she came to Paris; and the result had been, that she had detected its stereotyped mode of exhibition for ages past, by no means in harmony with modern social needs. Julio took up the subject, and handled it powerfully in his journal. Louise read a few extracts from his article to Madame de Tourabel, and the good sense of this excellent woman soon convinced her of the practical truth of his opinions. She had, together with her young friend, concerted schemes consistent with these new views, and these she must give up if she was to relinquish her society.

Her father was one of the most illustrious and high-born men under the old monarchy, while her husband was the only son of a general of the empire, who owed every thing he had to his sword and the favor of Napoleon I. Yet the lady had kept up all her relationships with the aristocratic old families in the Faubourg St. Germain: they flattered her pride. She had one foot in the imperial court, the other in the saloons of the past régime, a position which in some measure compensated to her for the decided mediocrity of the alliance which her poverty had compelled her to make. With this stately set she had no disposition to break. It would have been too severe a trial for her vanity. She might have given up visiting them, certainly, only she had no fancy to shut herself up. So she kept agitating the question in her mind; realizing, on the one hand, all the baseness of the slavery she was admitting, on the other, all the advantages of the position to which she clung. Eventually she wept over her cruel fate; tore out the love of Louise from her heart, as a lover might his mistress's image; dried her tears, and submitted to the countess.

Knowing that Louise was sick, she wrote her a note expressed in a style sufficiently cool to convince her that their old relations were to continue no longer. Friendship is almost as suspicious as love; and when two or three other notes, written in the most indifferent style, were all the answer that Louise received to her own warm-hearted, affectionate letters, she felt that her friend was following in the path of her

lover. In one of them she was told that M. and Mme. de Verdelon had returned to T—; still the great lady, in the whirl of society, had no leisure to call on the poor sufferer.

As soon as Louise could go out, she went to her old friend, and was coldly received. Julio's name was never mentioned, to her deep concern. Not a word of tenderness fell from the lady's lips, nor was the invitation to Sunday's quiet dinner renewed.

After staying a few minutes, Louise rose, and Madame de Tourabel made no effort to detain her.

"Good-by," said Louise, grasping convulsively the coldly offered hand, with a secret resolve never to enter that door again.

And she returned, weary, ill, and sad, to her humble home.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SCENE AT THE PROMOTER'S.

To succeed effectually in shutting the pulpit door on Julio was not enough for his implacable enemies.

Letters were sent to the provinces calling upon the bishops to spare no pains to prevent their clergy from reading that pestilent paper, the *Catholic Liberal*. As a natural result, several priests gave up the journal; some, even, who got it in a roundabout way, were denounced to the bishops. Soon its supporters were entirely confined to the laity.

All this time the Episcopal bench endeavored to call the attention of the Archbishop of Paris to the serious and wide-spread evils resulting from its issue.

Never were the French bishops in a more critical position than at that time. Beyond all doubt, many of them would gladly have seen his Holiness divested of his tiara, and the efforts to sustain the temporalities expiring by slow decay. But, then, there was the consideration, urged even by a declared enemy of the temporal power, that the interests of the most respectable of all the popes were identical with theirs, and that they were bound to support their brother bishop.

Many of them had read the *Catholic Liberal*, and done full justice to the delicate skill with which Julio had handled the most intricate and difficult subjects. They felt that his duties as a religious journalist were perfectly independent of theirs, while, at the same time, they saw that his periodical was designed to operate most beneficially in smoothing down rancorous oppositions, clearing away mutual hostilities, and realizing a calmer and healthier state of things in the bosom of the Church.

And yet it was absolutely essential that they should manage to remain united. Doubtless they exaggerated the obligation, and were disposed to meet it with needlessly excessive concessions; still, many considerations affected by

it, such as an unwillingness to countenance discord in the Church, were worthy of respect; and Julio began almost to ask himself whether he had not better recede from his invidious task, or, at all events, prosecute it with less ostentation in a quieter and more secluded sphere.

About the end of January, 1862, he received the following letter:

"Archbishopric of Paris.

"M. L'ABBÉ JULIO is requested to call at the palace, at two P.M., next Tuesday, as the promoter wishes to see him on important business.

"DE BARAMINOS, V.G., Promoter."

Accordingly, he presented himself at the appointed hour, on the appointed day, and found an ecclesiastic in the antechamber, who had been summoned like himself—an unhappy curé of one of the parishes round Paris. An inner door opened, and the priest was admitted into the private room of the promoter.

The discussion was long and exciting; a grave charge of some description or other had been alleged, and overwhelming evidence adduced. In reply to all that was urged, the accused represented himself as unjustly calumniated, and pursued by jealousy.

At length, however, having denied the accusation time after time, he fell on his knees before the promoter, and admitted his guilt, appealing to the compassion which he trusted to experience at his hands.

"Yes, I am in fault," he cried; "but do not be hard upon me."

And he urged every consideration that his fancy could suggest in the hope of softening his judge.

"You are so kind!" he exclaimed; which was about the last feature in the character of De Baraminos.

"My dear friend," replied the promoter, "there is no intention of destroying your prospects. We do not meditate making a public inquiry into the affair; all will be conducted as quietly as possible. Go away for a few weeks, and every thing will come straight in the mean time. I will settle the affair myself."

"A thousand thanks, sir," replied the priest; then, in a low tone, to himself, "You've only got to flatter these fellows, and you're sure to gain your end."

It was Julio's turn next.

The promoter received him with the utmost coldness. He had already begun to regret his too hasty compassion, and assumed his sternest and severest aspect.

"M. l'Abbé," he said, "your license is withdrawn. We were exceedingly unwilling to have recourse to this measure, but we have been so besieged by letters from the various bishops, even from Rome itself—so full of complaints about the enormity of your doctrines—that we can not authorize your officiating any longer in the diocese. You will doubtless say that you have not handled in your journal any questions of dogmatic theology. Very possibly; but at

this moment the bishops have marked out a course for themselves from which it will never do to suffer the clergy to depart; and if there are some who do not share the opinions of the majority, they are not the less resolved to maintain those opinions unassailed. There are occasions when silence is wisdom; and I am sorry that, after the advice that has been given you to this effect, you have failed to comprehend that most important point. Meanwhile, understand that you are no longer permitted to officiate in this diocese, so have the goodness to put yourself in communication with your bishop. You are not interdicted, you are simply treated as a stranger; the archbishop is not obliged to welcome every abbé who may take it in his head to come to Paris. Of course, you will consider that you have been harshly dealt with, but you owe it entirely to the attitude you have taken in religious politics."

There was clearly no answer to this harangue. So Julio made his bow and took his leave.

Crossing the antechamber, he met a priest who had come to see the promoter. He was a former curate of Dalbade, at T—, and had left the town for Paris in 1848, full of republican opinions. Arrived there, he established a review, called the *Reformer*, the principles of which were intensely radical. The periodical made some little noise; and a short passage, in which the editor saluted the red flag in the name of Catholicism, had all but led to very serious results.

He stopped Julio for a moment's conversation while he was waiting for his audience with the promoter. He had read some numbers of the *Catholic Liberal*.

"I am a predecessor of yours," he said, "in the task of religious journalism, but you are more in advance of your day than I was. Ah! what insults I have had! and I fancy you won't meet with a much fairer experience. Have you never known what it is to be hunted like a wild beast?"

"Pretty well," said Julio.

"Then, my dear abbé, give up that wretched work; you'll end by having every one against you—even your friends, if they are not over brave."

"I have on my side conscience, truth, the esteem of good men, and the respect even of my enemies."

"I quite believe you; but that's a precious small set of defenders. There was a time when I deluded myself, as you are doing, with those Utopian consolations. I fought desperately against the Jesuits and Ultramontanes; but when, in the end, I found myself deserted, even by men who had backed me up—left alone, absolutely alone—I saw it was hopeless to carry on the war any longer."

"What did you do then?"

"Submitted at once. They treated me kindly; but I had to swallow many a bitter pill at their hands, and to chant a complete recantation. They made me call white black, and

black white, and in a few months I had to write a big ultramontane book: it was clumsily done; but what can you expect from a man working against his conscience and personal liberty. If people don't come to regard the Pope as something decidedly superior to Gabriel, after reading my book, all I can say is, it isn't my fault. I did my best for him. Moreover, the *Catholic Atlas* did its readers the favor to insert some elaborate extracts from my performance, with remarks on the bliss the Church had experienced at seeing one of her stray flock return to the fold. It even went so far as to say that my happy restoration to the fold had affected my style beneficially; that it was more profound, more eloquent, and a lot besides; the whole thing wound up with an ascription to the Immaculate Virgin, who, according to the tenor of the article, had been good enough to rescue me from the abyss. After this guarantee of my orthodoxy, how could I fail to get on well! I have a little church at Fontenay-aux-Roses. It is a competency, and brings with it the prospect of farther advancement."

"Surely the bread it gives you is bitter, isn't it? Better break stones upon the road."

"Pleasant advice; only I fear my hands would get blistered. I have had great compunctions, I acknowledge: there have been times when I have even despised myself. But what could you expect; I don't profess to be a martyr."

"Good-by, M. le Curé; I pity you most sincerely;" and Julio left the palace.

The next day a paragraph appeared in the *Catholic Atlas* to the following effect:

"We learn, from a thoroughly reliable source, that ecclesiastical authority has at length withdrawn from the Abbé Julio de la Clavière, editor of the *Catholic Liberal*, his license to officiate in the diocese. It is asserted that the paper will cease to be issued at a very early date."

M. de Leich went with all speed to Julio on reading this paragraph.

"Stay," he said, in a tone of excitement, "this is too outrageous. You have done nothing to deserve punishment; your license is withdrawn, but you are not interdicted. You are just where this iniquitous sentence found you, as innocent as ever in the eyes of your friends. Continue among us. You will occupy a priesthood as dignified as that from which you have been expelled. The press is now the great rallying-point among men; in old times it was the banquet and the love-feast. The farther we advance, the more real sharing there is among brethren of that daily food which you and your class provide; so that yours is a sacramental work, and you in that work are the true priest. Stay, then, at your new post; and since the tendency of the day is toward a grievous materialism, it is well that there should be apostles left of simple faith and earnest love, ready to recall, with a powerful pen, the Christianity of the past, so far as it was glorious, holy, and true, and to ally it with what kindred elements shine

out in the piety of the present. Should you give up journalism at this crisis, you would break the chain of those brave anticipatory measures which for the last fifteen years have been preparing to rescue the clergy from the trammels of mysticism, and bring them out into light and day. You can not be certain that a man will be forthcoming ten years hence ready to take up your weary task. Were I to see you giving way now, you would remind me almost of a soldier deserting his flag."

"You may be right, my dear friend," replied Julio. "You see some dawning rays of the coming light. I have long been convinced of the reality of this daily communion through the press, this daily interchange of ideas from one end of the world to the other, through the means of a flying sheet like ours. It is, indeed, a comfort to me to have met with you at this moment of happy anticipation of things yet to be, in the midst of struggles, and wranglings, and bitter animosities in which so much invaluable energy is expended. But I feel that my task is done. I have been like a midnight sentinel, watching for a few hours for the coming light. Those whom God has set over me decline my farther service, and I recognize in their decision the voice of the Most High. Though my journal will cease, my book will remain, and I shall be able to take with me into my quiet solitude the consciousness that I have left behind me a reputation unstained by a single act of rebellion

against constituted authority. The desperate spirit of absolutism has conquered in its struggle with me. So much the better: truth can not be disseminated on the earth except by the breaking of the potter's vessel in which the sacred perfume is contained. Their triumph, however, will redound to their disgrace; their unrighteous acts will be recorded in coming history to their eternal shame. Not a murmur shall pass my lips against my cruel persecutors; I am at their mercy, like a bale of goods tossed from one wharf to another; like a beast of burden, whose load may be changed from time to time, but who is always under the yoke; like a slave, whose only variety of experience is to pass from one master to another. Such examples are necessary in the interest of the future race. We suffer for those yet to come. Liberty will return one day to the Church she has left; till then, I bow submissively, and, driven out from Paris, seek a shelter elsewhere. God will never leave me. His designs will yet receive their full accomplishment. Possibly, in some way, I shall be instrumental to the diffusion of truth, the knowledge of which is destined hereafter to spread even in the most benighted spiritual deserts."

M. de Leich forebore to press the matter farther. However, he undertook to write to one of the vicar-generals of T——, an old friend of his, on Julio's behalf, asking him to manage his quiet return from Paris to the Pyrenees.

PART VIII.

THE HOLOCAUST.

CHAPTER I.

EPISCOPAL DIPLOMACY.

M. DE LEICH wrote to the authorities at T—— to request the restoration of Julio to his old diocese. A week after he received a most gracious letter, intimating that monseigneur had appointed his protégé curé of Melles, a parish in the mountains near St. Béat. All that M. Julio had to do was to repair to T——; he would find the necessary authorization at the secretary's office, and might take possession of his new charge without delay.

Neither Julio nor M. de Leich had the faintest suspicion of what had passed between the archiepiscopal staffs at Paris and T—— during that week.

At the first request from the vicar-general, the friend of M. de Leich, to appoint Julio to a post in the diocese, the archbishop was all but in a violent rage.

"I recall to my diocese that brainless fellow who has been the plague of my life already! Don't suppose it for a moment. No, a thousand times no. Just imagine how the case would stand. After having been driven out of Paris, could he expect to find a protector in me? What would they say at Rome, where the Jesuits, who never know how to set bounds to their animosities, have blackened him a great deal more than he deserves, I admit, though he has many faults. He never would submit to his superiors, or consult them before acting; so much the worse for him now, if he has to take the consequences."

"I am not at all prepared to defend M. Julio to your highness. I don't sympathize with his opinions in the least; on the contrary, I think as you do, that he is an addle-pated fellow. He is one of those dreamers whom I look upon as very dangerous at a time when the priests, if left unrestrained, would implicate themselves in a host of irregularities, to the great injury of the Church; so I'm no protector of these independent gentlemen, whom the bishops invariably find it necessary to keep down in every possible way. But that is not the question at issue. He makes this application solely as belonging to the diocese of T——. He declares that he only quit-
ted it on the understanding conveyed by your highness in a solemn promise that he would be welcomed back whenever he might feel disposed to return."

"Oh yes, of course," said the archbishop. "I said that at the moment, in order to get rid of him more easily. Now, however, after the dis-

turbance that his published opinions have created at Rome and in all the dioceses, frankly, I should be glad if he would go and hang himself. If he comes back here, we shall have squabbles again, and squabbles I hate. I want to live at peace in my diocese."

"Your will is law, monseigneur. What answer shall I give to M. de Leich?"

"M. de Leich ought never to have made such a request."

"What is your highness's decision?"

"It's a most annoying case."

"I quite agree with you, monseigneur; but—"

"But—but! positively I don't know what to do."

"It seems to me, monseigneur, that you would be quite safe if you had a letter from the Archbishop of Paris recommending his return."

"Ah! to be sure, that would be a wise precaution; we'll write, then."

And the archbishop dictated the following letter:

"M. LE PROMOTEUR.—We have just had an application from M. l'Abbé Julio de la Clavière, formerly curé of St. Aventin, to be permitted to return to this diocese. As he has been residing at Paris for some time, we can not possibly receive him here without a recommendation from your archbishop. Of course you are well acquainted with his antecedents, and the extent to which he has involved himself in ceaseless antagonism to ecclesiastical authority. He appeals to us as his ordinary, a relationship which we are sorrowfully compelled to acknowledge.

"Your answer will decide the course we shall take. Receive, etc. Signed, ——."

This application threw the archiepiscopal council at Paris into great confusion. It was a serious business to refuse Julio his letters testimonial. To begin with, it was practically prohibiting him from resuming his ecclesiastical functions in his old diocese, and it was also giving him a pretext for remaining in Paris, even without a license. On the other hand, to give it was to stultify the recent withdrawal of that license. At the same time, the man must be got rid of at any price. The Jesuits, after having everlastingly urged them to put him under episcopal censure, had at length succeeded. There they felt they must stop, and hence their desire to see the last of him.

So the promoter replied as follows:

"MONSEIGNEUR,—We have it in our power to furnish you with the recommendation you

ask in the case of M. l'Abbé Julio de la Clavière, a priest of your diocese, who has remained here some time. Nothing has come to our knowledge in the least degree discreditable to his moral character. Receive, etc.

"DE BARAMINOS, V.G., *Promoter*."

Julio, receiving this certificate of honorable conduct, like a servant paid and sent off, is a singular scene in this singular story.

"There," said the promoter, as he put his letter in an envelope, "that will do."

"It's short," said the archbishop who presided, "but it's safe. After all, we have done the Abbé Julio a service in sending him from Paris. Perhaps, in some quiet mountain parish, where he will doubtless be placed, his indefatigable enemies will lose sight of him, if not entirely forget him."

"The Jesuits never forget," said one of the members of the council.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS, PARIS.

It cost the brother and sister acute suffering to leave Paris. Indeed, Louise was so thoroughly identified with Julio's particular tastes and favorite occupations, that she regretted deeply his abandonment of a task for which he seemed to be so thoroughly adapted. It required all the prospective charms of nature, in its mountain glory, combined with the strong attractive influence of the land of their birth, to reconcile them to the coming change.

"Paris! Paris!" they would often say to one another, in their new home. A simple exclamation enough, but significant by embodying their keen regrets.

Let it be added, for the information of those who are interested in the fortunes of our exiles, that Melles, where we now find them, is a lovely spot, like St. Aventin, in the grandeur of its scenery, but enjoying a milder temperature, inasmuch as its elevation is lower; nor is it so near the glaciers.

The presbytery was large and convenient. Louise had a lofty bedroom, with a southern aspect, and a small adjoining dressing-room, not unlike her old haunt in the Rue Barouillière. Then there was a beautiful garden, full of every description of fruit-tree, trellises, bee-hives with a little straw roofing over them, the whole presenting an almost aristocratic residence. Moreover, the living of Melles, though it was not one of the livings of the canton, was considered, from its importance in point of population and revenue, one of the best of the mountain preferences. So Julio had fallen on his feet. We may add, too, that the remembrance of his gentle and blameless pastoral career at St. Aventin was sufficiently recent and vivid to have created a most favorable impression respecting him in the valley of St. Béat.

His residence in Paris had not in the least unhinged him for country life, with all its simple tastes, nor yet destroyed his tender sympathy for the poor, nor unfitted him for gentle ministrations at the bed of sickness. The St. Aventin people often asked after their old pastor, whom they always called the priest who had been the people's friend. A touching picture of true ministerial relationship, doubtless that which dwelt in Rousseau's mind when he said that, in his judgment, the happiest earthly life was that of a village curé.

Julio at once betook himself to his new duties. He called on the Curé of St. Béat and the neighboring clergy; nor did he leave unvisited the humblest cottage in his parish, treating its tenant with that complete respect which told him that he, too, had his rank and weight in the great Christian family.

Among the papers which have assisted the compilation of this story is a letter from Julio to M. de Leich shortly after his arrival. We give it below:

"Melles, near St. Béat.

"Do you think I have forgotten you, dear M. de Leich—you to whom we owe the quiet peace of our solitary but quiet home? What an unbounded joy it has been to see our beloved mountains again! They are always glorious, and always refreshing to us, poor victims of merciless oppression. The air here is so pure that our physical energies, which had been undermined (mine by close study, and Louise's by the incessant torrent of anonymous notes, which, since our arrival here, I find she used to receive almost every day, as well as by a host of other anxieties), are now reviving. I hope we shall soon pick up our strength, and that I shall recover health sufficient for ministerial work. Thank God for so mercifully sending us here! Thank you, dearest friend, for having been the instrument of his loving-kindness.

"While, however, we are out of the way of our persecutors, in a quiet solitude, we can't help feeling the pains of exile. We had surrounded ourselves with a new world. I was absorbed with my newspaper effort to unite the priesthood with modern society. That was a different ministry, unconfined by the limits of a parish, even of a town or province, but spreading its influence in every region where our common language is spoken.

"It cost me much to give up this glorious task. But I thought it right and well for a priest to obey; and when I was told to seek ministerial employment elsewhere, I concluded that I was summoned by God from the field of discussion and controversy to another work.

"But this was not lightly realized, or my resolve easily taken. I find it hard to name the name of Paris without visible emotion. I thought I was a fixture there; one among the many upright, though often differing, thinkers who compose the great school of intellectual activity and progress at work in its midst. These all, in their invariable search after truth, I re-

joined to greet as brothers; while, on the other hand, I received a cordial welcome—not the less cordial because I abstained from rendering controversy bitter and abusive.

"There were some who resented this, and called me an apostate, because I had protested against their rancorous animosities, and love of cursing and burning. I desired to see free worshippers of the Most High. Their fondness was for a faith enforced by police regulations. I longed to see the Church exalted by the exhibition of tenderness and love. They would fain have her terrible in her relentless pursuit of the unbeliever to the edge of a miserable grave. My desire was to educate the Christian into gradual and successive developments in the Christian faith; theirs appeared to be to concentrate his gaze on mediæval darkness, and to train up to a firm embrace of an unaltered and unalterable system of superstition.

"No wonder they hated me, and, being the strong against the weak, compelled me to submit. It was a case of inequality of forces; I was the one to go to the wall—truth and all.

"And now it is over. *Consummatum est*. You will treasure up the memory of the martyr's dying cry; you will bear witness to my agony while the sacrifice was going on.

"Ah! Paris! Paris! beautiful Paris! the new Rome of the West, the empress of the world; subduing, not by dint of soldiers' steel, but by the mightier weapon of human thought! Fair home of intellect, I bid thee grateful adieu, through this letter which none but a friend will read, grateful for that thou didst receive me in my weakness and obscurity, as though I had been the most powerful and illustrious of thy sons. I shall ever cherish for thee a filial reverence. In the ebbings and flowings of time and circumstance—in days when the tumult of the moment is bearing away on its bosom men and things, and substituting new orders in rapid succession—in such vehement heaving, as of the huge billows of the ocean, individual names are soon forgotten. Yet I ask of thee one boon, the only one I would seek to pilfer from those who have worked as earnestly in the cause of truth as I have—let me cheer myself in my latest hours with the thought that of those who have grasped my hand, among your sons and daughters, there may be a few who will recall me as a humble pioneer in the march of liberty.

"And you, my dear friend, do not forsake or forget the exile. It will be some comfort to read the simple word Paris at the top of a letter. You will help me to remember the city I love so well.

"Good-by.

JULIO."

CHAPTER III.

JULIO'S BOOK ON THE TEMPORAL POWER.

It was useless for Julio to seek retirement; his genius was not to be suppressed. While,

in his capacity of humble village curé, he had identified himself with the condition and feelings of the simple rustic, as the far-seeing prophet of the future, he was anticipating, with restless anxiety, the grave issues of the coming time. It could not but strike him that a strange spirit of infatuation had come over the minds of those high in authority in the Church, and obscured their view of the true interests of Catholicism, causing them to enter on a path of utter delusion, destined to issue, before long, in the entire episcopacy accepting as a dogma the theory of the temporal sovereignty.

Julio felt a warm admiration for the character of Pius IX. During his brief stay with Father Villeta he had heard several touching and interesting stories of the private life of the gentle and blameless pontiff. He knew how rare had been the instances of men of such spotless individual reputation occupying that exalted seat. He knew, too, how earnest and single-minded had been his endeavors to effect reforms at the commencement of his reign, and he did not blame the man whose drawback was due rather to want of courage than want of heart. He remembered his remarkable announcement in full consistory that he would not raise the question of his temporal sovereignty to the level of a dogma—an announcement which, as it carried with it all the force of a final decision, suppressed, for a time, the raging excitement. Only for a time, however; the agitation soon returned, and the ruling of the Pope was got rid of by the ingenious subtlety, that if the doctrine of the temporal power was not a dogma, it was a truth for all that, which it was heresy to deny: miserable evasions, which the honest spirit of Julio indignantly repudiated. Blushing for Catholicism, and for the Church that had produced men like St. Bernard, St. Francis de Sales, Bossuet, and Fénelon—grieving over the degradation to which she had been reduced by the follies of ultramontaniam, he thought he should like to take up the question on paper, with a view to bringing it out as it presented itself to his private thoughts.

Tracing the subject from the origin of Christianity, he proved, incontestably, that the theory of an earthly royalty had no place in the writings of our Lord and his apostles. This point he corroborated by quoting ecclesiastical writers from the earliest ages to the Council of Nice, challenging any to show that this doctrine could, either directly or indirectly, be inferred from their pages, and asking how it had happened that a view ignored by the founders of the Church, and unknown in the Church in the day of her prime, could ever have been foisted into the Christian faith.

Thence he went on to show that the appropriation of Rome and the States of the Church was designed originally, not for the foundation of a sovereignty, but as a source of ecclesiastical revenue for a numerous priesthood; though, by a most illogical evasion, the structure of that anomalous power had been erected upon it; re-

marking, that so little had Charlemagne set up the Pope as King of Rome, that his successor, Louis le Débonnaire, rated his Holiness soundly for executing a man in the Eternal City without his permission.

Selecting an entire chapter of a book of Fénelon's, entitled *The Authority of the Sovereign Pontiff*—unfortunately very little known and read—he proceeded to trace the history of the papal sovereignty, showing how those whose ambition had been to wear a crown like other kings, and sway as veritable a sceptre, were men of most questionable private character, while the best of the popes had been invariably found among the number of those who paid allegiance to king or emperor, reigning themselves as spiritual sovereigns.

It will easily be understood that a disposition so refined and benevolent as Julio's would effectually guard his work against any violence of language; only he expounded the oath taken by the sovereign pontiffs to suffer no interference with their dominions as connected with a custom which had obtained among many of them, of alienating a large portion of the papal territory for the purpose of converting it into petty principalities, under the government, and for the maintenance of young persons very nearly related to them.

He upset the great objection that the temporal power was indispensable for the due exercise of the spiritual, alleged by the Ultramontanes, as evident from the fact that the severe condemnation of the Jesuits had been brought about by external pressure.

He argued that this historical incident proved that the temporal sovereignty was not strong enough to support and protect the spiritual, even against the simple outside pressure of a diplomatic note. Hence it was credited with a power it did not really possess; the independence of the Church being derived from its divine origin, and not from such material props as the fancied rights of the tiara might supply.

Finally, approaching the question of the actual position of the pontificate in the presence of the yearnings of the nation after a united Italy, he showed the greatness of the loss to Catholicism from its obstinate refusal to make common cause with the national party—a terrible mistake, attended by most deplorable results, especially in a religious point of view.

"If, in the short space of fifty years," he added, in conclusion, "Italy were overrun with infidelity, I could only attribute this melancholy state of things to the distressing misrule of Pius IX. and the Roman court, and their grievous error in attempting to repress that sentiment of exalted patriotism which reigns throughout the entire peninsula. God grant, in mercy, that in the issues I predict I may prove a false prophet!"

M. de Leich superintended the editing of his book in Paris, and communicated to him the lively dissatisfaction which its appearance had caused to the Ultramontane party. Its calmness of tone and respectful attitude toward con-

stituted authority did but add weight to its arguments and increase its influence.

The tumult and rage against him knew no bounds; cries of malice, hatred, and scorn resounded on every side; denunciations the most inveterate and implacable flashed along the electric wires from one end of France to the other.

Bishops received letters from every direction; laymen in the Gallic Church assembled in council; their president issued manifestoes, full of rather heavy verbiage, but pointed enough to convey the essence of his views to such prelates as he hoped to win over. The Ultramontane bishops labored at persuading their more sensible brethren to join in an official condemnation of Julio's book. Anxious to avoid giving material for farther fights, though equally resolved against ceding their power in the presence of a rising faction, they gave way to pressure from all sides, some of them admitting that the proscribed author had been imprudent, while others were bold enough to credit him with the best intentions. Thus the most furious animosities were revived again, and a scheme of fresh persecution projected and matured.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THUNDERCLAP.

THE feelings of keen regret which our hero and heroine experienced on leaving Paris did not soon depart. Weeks after they had been settled at Melles, Julio's sorrowful yearnings after his old home remained as active as ever. When they were at St. Avenin, the attachment of Louise to Verdelon had crept up as a cold shadow between brother and sister; she was first in the world to Julio, he only second to her. Love is so utterly intolerant of a rival near the throne—so unbounded in its demands on the whole thoughts and faculties of the soul, that Louise's presence in the presbytery at that time was scarcely less a pain than a pleasure to her disappointed brother. Now, however, cured of that unhappy attachment, she lived only for him, devoted to his tastes and studies; each was the other's self; each shared the other's thoughts. She, conscious that it was now her turn to atone for the regrets she had previously caused him, put forth her most winning arts to cheer his despondency. The pure mountain air had wonderfully revived her; her cheeks, that had been so long pale and emaciated, were now glowing with the roses of health. She was, in fact, more beautiful than ever. All her cheerfulness had come back. She was younger than she had been in her whole life, and the joyous change delighted her. She knew her presence there made sunshine round her brother; so she went and came, chanting the simple national melodies that Julio loved, and which pleasant voices had sung long days ago by the cradle of their infancy. One would have supposed, in short, that they had both returned to childhood's days, and were commencing life all over again.

Julio soon forgot his sufferings. So that Louise was there, all was there; so that on returning from his parish work he found her waiting for him, with her radiant smile, he had all he asked. Each day as it arose dispersed his rising anxieties with reference to her health; each day strengthened the happy confidence that the treasure of his life would yet be spared to him.

Thus passed nearly two months in purest and happiest enjoyment. Louise assured her brother that she was gaining strength daily in the joyous spring weather, and her appearance confirmed her words. Yet a strange cloud had gathered over their heads. And if the reader will look into Julio's room, where he is sitting with his papers round him, or if he will follow Louise, who has just run up to tap at the door, and received for answer, "I will come down directly, dear," he, more fortunate than the young lady herself should he get a peep inside, would see the poor fellow at his table, with his head upon his hands, while large scalding tears are channeling their way down his cheeks; another moment, and he is on his knees, calling on God, and this is his piteous cry:

"O God, my God, behold my anguish. Wherefore hast Thou given me this bitter cup? Is it not a dream—a terrible dream? How can I tell Louise? Tell her! I can not—I will not; let me leave her in happy ignorance. I am the minister of the Crucified One; it is well that I, too, should bear my cross."

And then a quiet prayer, and then a holy calm, and then a cheerful smile, as, composed and refreshed, he seeks his sister.

"I am obliged to go to Argut to-day, dear. Perhaps I shall not return till late, so you mustn't wait for me."

"My dear Julio, you must let me come and meet you. You know that's one of my greatest treats. Besides, you'll be bringing me back a collection of mountain flowers, and I shall want to see it as soon as I can."

"I'll bring the nosegay, dearest; but I shall not be home till long after sunset. Remember how chill the evening air is, and think of your chest."

"Nonsense, you dear old boy. Nothing hurts me now."

"You are mistaken, Louise; you had a long coughing fit this morning. Please do as I ask you, dear."

"Well, I suppose I must, you darling tyrant, as you're so anxious about my health. All the same, it's in capital condition. Julio, dearest, do you know I often think how good God has been to us in making me strong again. Our beloved Paris, where we lived so happily in the joy of our golden dreams, was a treacherous friend to me, I fear. You can't imagine what I suffered there. But here I feel all my physical force reviving. Our enemies have taken our worldly wealth, Julio, but we have been spared to each other;" and, passing her arm round him, she rested her beautiful head on his shoulder.

At first he almost repulsed her, but so sudden was the movement that she scarcely noticed it; then, pressing his lips to her forehead, he left the house. She watched him as he passed away in the distance, wondering at his strange unrest, and paining herself with curious questions as to what it was that he had so evidently concealed from her, till a sudden fit of coughing arrested her musings; she put her handkerchief to her mouth, and, on removing it, found it steeped in blood.

"Ah!" she said, "this is the first return of this dangerous symptom for many weeks. Merciful God, shouldst Thou be pleased to take my life, who would be left to comfort Julio?"

And her tears flowed abundantly.

As for Julio, he spent the whole day in the mountains, returning at night composed and calm. Louise, in spite of her anxious scrutiny, failed to detect any trace of the anguish he had gone through; while he, for his part, was utterly ignorant of the fatal symptom that had occurred in his absence. Thus they suffered alone. Their spirits were estranged by a mutual secrecy. Happiness had left the presbytery.

Julio wrote the whole night by way of relief, and what he wrote revealed the secret of his incurable distress.

"To tranquillize my spirits, I have wearied out my bodily frame; but even if I have succeeded sufficiently to return home with enough cheerfulness to conceal from Louise the fact that I am almost broken-hearted, I have not attained sufficient mastery over myself to be able to arrange my thoughts in clear, consecutive order.

"Perhaps I shall be more successful if I set to work to write them down.

"This morning I rose with a spirit overflowing with joy. I threw open my window, and, as the fresh mountain breeze, flower-laden, fanned my cheek, I felt an indescribable sensation of gratitude, and longed to glorify His name who has done so much for me. It was one of those moments when the heart is full to bursting of love, life, and hope. No sorrowful thought could have found a resting-place within me. True, my musings turned upon my enemies; but I could only pity them, and thank God, who had kept me free from all feelings of hatred.

"In this serene and happy spirit I went to my little church; Louise had furnished the altar with freshest and most fragrant flowers, among which the early summer gale was wandering, while the golden sunshine glorified the many-colored leaves. I commenced the solemn service with greater joy than I have ever known since I became a priest—even in those earlier days of ministry when faith and love are in all the vigor of their youth.

"On returning to the presbytery, however, I heard Louise's dry, hacking cough. I felt an indescribable pang as I listened to the terrible sound, and my sweet morning happiness vanished like a dream.

"The attack lasted indeed only for a very short time. Louise herself proposed a long walk in the mountain; but I refused, fearing to fatigue her, and said I wanted to devote the morning to arranging our family papers. I even joked as I told her that I meant to draw up the *La Clavière* 'tree,' and that for this purpose I should have to disturb the dust of those precious parchments which our ancestors had been so good as to leave to us. Louise laughed at the aristocratic turn affairs had taken, exclaiming, as I left her in the drawing-room arranging her mountain flowers, that, in her judgment, those blossoms were worth all the flowers of heraldry, or the leaves and ornaments of royal and ducal crowns.

"I went up stairs, and, having shut myself in my own room, opened the identical box which *Tournichon* had given us, and which was inscribed 'family papers.' While I was hunting through its contents, I found a little case at the bottom—locked. Having hunted through the chest for the key without success, I was on the point of calling Louise, when—why, I know not—I retraced my steps. The contents of that case were unknown, and there is always something mysterious in that thought; so much so that I felt my hand tremble as I examined the lock, to see how I could open it without doing any damage.

"The lock had been very carefully made. However, I managed to effect my purpose by slipping back the bolt, and the first object that met my eye in the inside was a picture of my father's second wife—Louise's mother. It was very like Louise; indeed, it might almost have been taken for her. I kissed it, under the influence of the double sentiment of brotherly love and respect for the memory of the dead.

"There she was, thoughtful and sorrowful as ever. How often I used to romp in her room, round Louise's cradle, while she, wiping away furtive tears, would say to herself, 'Dear boy! one day he will protect my child.' I remember my father's passionate love for the new infant. Perhaps I should have been a little jealous had I not been as devoted to her myself, even in those early days.

"Then came a change. *Madame de la Clavière* died when Louise was seven years old. My father became morose, reserved, and restless, and seemed as though he could scarcely bear to see his once darling child. However, we attributed the sudden caprice to his sorrow for the dead, as well as to a painful disease which was laying violent hold upon him. By a strange fancy, meanwhile, his affection for me seemed to increase every day.

"He died, leaving his orphan children to the care of their aunt. Some time before this he had sustained successive losses to a considerable extent. However, this was set down as the result of incapacity for business proceeding from his morbid condition. He had placed all his available cash in a Paris bank. A few months after this he set out for Paris, and on his return

announced that he was a ruined man—that his banker had absconded with all his money.

"The sight of *Madame de la Clavière's* portrait recalled all these painful memories of the past. I continued to examine the case, and found some pages, written in my father's hand—fatal pages, which, doubtless, his sudden death had prevented him from destroying. They contained the secret which he meant to have buried with him in the tomb, but which, by this fearful accident of my discovering them, had risen up to ruin the entire happiness of my life.

"For these fragments were addressed to no one. They were written like the pages I am writing now, in a solitary season of deepest and most unutterable emotion, when the heart feels as though it must relieve itself of its oppressive load. They contained agonizing reflections, bitter regrets of golden dreams dispelled forever. There were some half-effaced words upon them—words half effaced by tears, and mine flowed down to the spot where the all but worn-out stain was visible.

"This woman, whom my father so passionately loved—whom he had surrounded with every earthly blessing she had ever known, had never been thoroughly his; and Louise was not his child, though born years after his marriage with her mother. She was delicate in the extreme as an infant; and my father, full of an unutterable dread of losing her, centred on her his warmest love.

"After her birth her mother's health declined visibly. Her melancholy increased every day. She seemed to be sinking under some heavy sorrow.

"In her last hour she confessed the whole, imploring my father's promise not to spurn her child from his feet. He yielded, but the happiness of his life was gone forever. And then I learned from that terrible paper that Louise was not my sister."

CHAPTER V.

THE PRIEST AND MAN.

"NOTHING that I have ever suffered at all comes up to my present anguish. When Louise disappeared from *St. Avenin*, terrible as my distress was, I kept up under the influence of the hope of recovering her. When the doors of the *Inquisition* cell closed upon me, I bade an eternal adieu—oh, so bitter—to the outside world; but I raised my voice to the orphan's Father, and sought his help. I looked upon the death which I thought to be at hand not as a terrible shade, but as an angel of deliverance, and was at rest as I thought of a better and a brighter land. Then I could analyze my feelings day by day with the nicest exactitude, tracing every pain and its source, and measuring its acuteness; but now I know not how or what I am suffering.

"Sometimes I think my mind is giving way;

but no, that is not the case. I am only wretched—utterly wretched. Louise is not my sister—ample explanation of all. Those fatal words in that manuscript of my father's have carved themselves into my soul. A thousand strange convictions have risen up within me. It seems as though all the love I had borne her since her birth had vanished. Then, in its place, comes another love, intoxicating my soul with delight. I am almost overcome with ecstasy at the thought that she is not my sister—that she may be my wife, when back comes the cruel fact, dashing the cup from my lips—wretched priest, you may not marry.

"But why seek to embody delirious thoughts? Nothing is altered in our way of living. But my heart is changed; what once was brotherly attachment is now a lover's passion. All her thousand endearing ways deepen the infatuation, till at length, when she wiped my forehead with her handkerchief, as I came in exhausted from mountain visits, I almost thrust her from me. Indeed, so evident was the movement on my part that she seemed deeply hurt.

"No. She isn't my sister, nor can I disguise from myself that a terrible crisis has occurred in the history of my life. She has shown me myself.

How little I thought what a sacrifice I was making when I gave myself up to the priesthood! How little I understood the iniquity of the celibate vow! Afterward when, as the cardinal's secretary, the whole correspondence of the diocese came before me, I saw and heard what convinced me that to bind himself to a solitary life was a sin in man. Yet I saw many in the priesthood whose lives I knew to be blameless, and I felt that ideal perfection was within my reach. Subsequent experience, indeed, convinced me more and more how hard it was to realize that ideal, though I did not repent that I had by my free choice proposed it to myself as the object of my life.

"The safeguard I leant upon was twofold—my devotion to scientific pursuits and my love for my sister. I thought that the intellectual life could easily overcome the natural, while Louise was at my side to absorb the affection of my heart. This love was my rock. I leant upon it and rejoiced in my security. But the rock is sinking, and I am struggling with the breakers."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIEST AND MAN—(continued.)

"ANOTHER week, and still I am as far as ever from tranquillizing my spirit. I have exerted myself to the utmost to hide my agitation from Louise, but with poor success. How strange I must appear to her! how utterly at a loss she must be to account for my singular manner! Once I could not bear her a moment out of my sight; now I am forever inventing pretexts for leaving her in the presbytery alone,

while I pass the day in roving up and down among the mountains. I return home to a silent dinner, and, the hurried meal over, shut myself up in my room to correct the second edition of my book on the Temporal Power.

"This is most glorious weather: earth and air are full of light, and life, and sound, and fragrance. Yesterday I found a bird's nest. My step had been so light that the mother had not heard it, and, as I moved away a branch very gently, I saw her with her wings spread out over her young, stretching forward her pretty feathered head, and calling on her mate to bring some food. Soon I saw him hop on to a twig hard by, with a whole provision store in his beak, while the happy mother shook her wings and uttered a sweet sound of joy.

"And thus Thou teachest me, O my God! through all creation, the holy happiness of family love, while at the same time there are those who assume to be wiser than Thyself, and to declare that the priest, set apart for Thy service, should be expelled from participating in it.

"And yet I have loved this priestly life. I thought I was made for it. I knew there were reforms needed in the Church. I felt that enforced celibacy ought to be abolished, inasmuch as many young priests bind themselves by its obligations without calculating the step they are taking.

"Still, as I said to Loubère in our last conversation, if I were called upon to-morrow to choose for or against the ministry, I would at once and forever assume its holy functions. The priest is the one man appointed to teach what is right. The magistrate—the priest of civil life—waits for the commission of crime and avenges it. We anticipate and prevent it by showing a more excellent way. So our office is illustrious indeed. The magistrates say, 'You have sinned, and we punish you in the name of the law.' The priest says, 'You have sinned; go and sin no more; I forgive you in the name of God.'

"Yes, it is a glorious work to say to the brethren, love one another, for that is the law of Christ; to the guilty, though society repudiate you, I can not, I dare not. The Good Shepherd is ready to carry the lamb in His arms. From highest heaven the Father looks down, and stretches out His hands to the returning prodigal.

"Oh, why are such holy ministerial joys embittered by such aching thoughts!

* * * * *

"Louise is beginning to show signs of anxiety as to my altered manner. That thorough familiarity of affection, once so refreshing to us both, is become to me now a terrible trial.

"This last fortnight I have passed through the severest sufferings that it is possible to experience. What wild projects have I not conceived! what wild resolves have I not taken! now resolving to fly from her, and bury myself and my soul-consuming attachment in a monastery; again, reaching the conviction that rash

vows to man are not binding before God, and purposing, accordingly, to carry off my beloved Louise, no longer my sister, into some far-off land, where I might make her my wife. Twenty love-letters to that effect have I written and destroyed.

"And then, a struggle as to whether or not she should know the whole, ending with the conviction that it would be more manly and more brave in me to suffer alone. Possibly, were she told the truth, she would cease to love me. How I envy her her present peaceful affections! Why should I not drive out of my mind the memory of that fatal discovery, and assert to my own heart, in dogged opposition to all this fever of disquietude, she is but your sister after all.

* * * * *

"To pacify my spirit, I have doubled and trebled my work. Instead of avoiding Louise's presence, I have secured her aid in my researches after materials for a new work on the philosophy of Christianity. I can not do without her. I want her constantly to help me, as she used to do at Paris. Her intelligence is a wonderful assistance; besides, she has a remarkable facility for the kind of employment I give her.

"I have attributed my oddity of manner to physical sufferings which I wished to conceal from her. We have resumed our old walks and talks. A common observer would say that no change had passed over us at all; but I feel it, and so does she; and there ever seems to be creeping up between us a hideous phantom, pushing her away and grinning at my anguish. Oh, for the peace and the healthfulness of our brotherly and sisterly love! oh, for the repose they have carried away in their everlasting flight!

* * * * *

"Yesterday I was horribly selfish. I alluded to Verdalon—a name we had silently resolved never to mention in each other's presence. Louise turned red and white alternately: evidently she still loves him; and how should it be otherwise! Even when disappointed affection is in a measure healed, the wound leaves scars behind.

"I went out to visit a sick person, and, on my return, found her with her eyes very red. She had been weeping in my absence. Could any condition be more wretched than mine? As a brother, I might have inquired into her anguish, and sought to console her; but now such unrestricted sympathy of sorrow and joy was forbidden forever. I was her brother no longer."

CHAPTER VII.

THE COUNCIL OF LIMOUX.

APRIL, 1862, was drawing to a close when the Provincial Council of Gascony was appointed to be held at Limoux. Julio, as belonging to the T— diocese, was within the jurisdic-

tion of this assembly. A long and violent letter, elaborated by a cabal connected with the *Catholic Atlas*, under the presidency of a former editor, was addressed to the Bishop of —, a prelate of well-known ultramontane tendencies, and a personal enemy of Julio's. At last it seemed probable that the Archbishop of T— would lay aside his previous hesitation, and that the opponent of the theories of Rome would be condemned to perpetual silence.

The council was opened on the morning of the 5th of May by a miscellaneous procession from the cathedral, which made a general circuit through the principal streets of the town. After the cross and banner came the brothers of the Church schools, seminarists of the upper and lower seminary, missionary priests, monks of the various orders in the province, town curés, canons of the cathedrals, theological students of Pamiers, Carcassonne, and other places, the suffragan bishops of the province, with crosses, and mitres, and gold copes, the whole winding up with the most reverend president.

The Archbishop of T— delivered the preliminary address in the presence of the rank and fashion of Limoux and the small surrounding towns. There were reserved seats for the authorities, while on an elevated dais, consecrated to their use, the ladies spread out their ample robes of many-colored silks, expanded with enormous crinolines. There was a stall for the Prefect of Aude, which would have been equally allotted to his service had he been a Protestant or a Jew. A similar attention was paid to the general commanding; the president of the Assize Court was treated with equal courtesy (though, for any thing the heads of the council knew, the military personage might have been an infidel; the judicial, a disciple of Proudhon or Rénan, or brother of Vanhergen) in an assembly, according to the decree of which, whoever did not believe in the Immaculate Conception was a heretic of the first magnitude.

Who, then, it might be asked, comprised the earnest Catholics in that assembly?

Of course there were the clergy, and probably the various church servants, such as beadles, sacristans, organists, choristers, etc., etc. Then there were the vestrymen, a few old men, a few old women, and, moreover, young ones, and these were all.

The rest of the gathering consisted of ladies and gentlemen of fashion, inquisitive, indifferent, unbelieving, skeptical, yet perfectly well-behaved, and going through the various ceremonial requirements with admirable patience.

The burdensome eloquence of the president expended itself in a long and wearisome address, the one blissful topic of which was the renewal of the face of the earth by the Council of Limoux. Nothing was omitted from this wonderful effusion; certainly not the immortal Pius IX. and his still more immortal pontificate, nor the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception, nor yet the anguish of the heavily afflicted pon-

tiff. Room was also found for a fair amount of anathemas against the Revolution, which, in the elegant phraseology of the allocution, had been vomited out of the mouth of hell, while a corner was kept clear for the accommodation of the coming triumphs of the regal papacy, under the rule of Mary the Immaculate, the sole executioner of heretics of every grade, without a single exception, throughout the world.

The next day the business of the council was arranged at a special sitting. The promoter administered to the canons, theologians, and canonists present the oath of secrecy with reference to any thing the bishops might say; also of secrecy on whatever matter might weaken the respect due to the council or to those who composed it.

Then the presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, and theologians of the different congregations were named in succession. The sittings for reading the decrees were next agreed upon, as well as the general assemblies at which the discussions were to take place.

These preliminaries once over, the labors of the council commenced, and were diligently prosecuted. The sixth general council, under the presidency of the Archbishop of T—, took place on the 10th, at four P.M., in the presence of the suffragan bishops, the deputations from the various chapters, and the theological students. The most reverend president having repeated the prayer *Adsumus*, one of the secretaries present read the minutes of the last meeting. Two decrees were next approved, one proscribing liberal journals in general, and the *Cycle*, *Coq National*, and *Feuille* in particular, as convicted of unsoundness on the famous "power" question, and of too great a fancy for the Italian Revolution; the other prohibiting whirling dances, such as polkas, mazurkas, etc., etc., as being inexpedient and objectionable.

These two edicts had been most carefully prepared by the committee "de bonis moribus," the old men composing it being decidedly of opinion that all the miseries of the nineteenth century were due to the waltz, or rather to the devil who invented it.

Then the right reverend president of the committee on matters of doctrine prayed speech with the most reverend president of the council, and held forth as follows:

"Most illustrious and most reverend fathers and very dear brethren, I cordially concur in these two decrees directed against certain vices in the Church, and designed to exterminate them. In issuing them you have manifested a profound acquaintance with the evils of modern society—evils which expose the real character of its pretended civilization. But I make bold to say there is a greater scandal than these—a scandal that comes nearer home to ourselves—a scandal which forbearance—I might almost call it culpable—at all events, very much to be regretted forbearance is at this moment tolerating in our midst; need I say that I speak of heresy." (Profound sensation.)

"A new Arnaud de Bresse is ravaging the south like a beast of prey, and seeking to destroy human souls by his pestilential teaching." (Several voices: "Damnation to the heretic!")

"This destroyer of the faith, this enemy of the Church and the throne of St. Peter, against which, for several years past, he has been hurling perpetual blasphemies, is a priest in the diocese of T—, and bears the hated name Julio de la Clavière. Like all heretics that ever have been or ever will be, he assumes the appearance of an angel of light. The modesty of his demeanor is undeniable, as much so the gentleness of his language, and his affected devotedness to the true interests of the Church. By this fair but false assumption of probity, generosity, pious fervor, and attachment to the papacy, and the Pope individually, for whom, indeed, he declares he has a peculiarly warm regard—by this outside show of Catholic spirit he has insnared pious souls, deceived the weak, and seduced the ignorant to their exceeding peril." (General cries of "Damnation to the heretic, damnation again and again." "He ought to be summarily dealt with by the council.")

"But the deadliest injuries he has wrought in the Church have resulted from his writings. Some time since he was guilty of positive forgery by putting forth a certain publication as proceeding from a late cardinal, while it was clearly the product of his own imagination, and teemed with blasphemies against the Church. It is notorious that this disgraceful pamphlet was most largely read at T—, that its author was praised by the skeptic and the infidel, and described as a writer of conspicuous merit." (A voice: "Let the council curse him.")

"Nor is this all. He has disgraced the pulpit by the publication of errors, to the great scandal of the faithful, and the openly-avowed delight of the enemies of the Church.

"In the States of the Church he went so far as to imitate the worst foes of religious communities by breaking into a convent, and carrying off an inmate from the cloister—a crime which the Holy Inquisition avenged, but with such laxity of vigilance over the prisoners that he found no difficulty in escaping from a punishment which, had he had any remnant within him of the faith he professed, he would have done well to have accepted in humble penitence. Since that time he has been a daily contributor to the newspapers, through which he has promulgated every conceivable heresy condemned by the authority of the most holy pontiffs Gregory XVI. and Pius IX.

"Finally, he has filled up the measure of his iniquities by issuing an elaborate work against the temporal power, ignoring the constitution of the sovereign pontiffs, in which it is set forth that the Pope has been intrusted with the two swords; that all power having been given to Christ, all power has, by consequence, been transferred to his representative on earth." (Numerous cries: "Curses on the heretic!")

"Yes, indeed, most reverend and most illustrious fathers and very dear brethren, cursed be the priest who has disgraced his holy office by devising a shameful calumny against an archbishop, a prince of the Church.

"Cursed be the priest who has preached falsehood in the pulpit of truth!

"Cursed be the priest who has broken into the sacred seclusion of the convent, protected by the authority of councils and the papal constitution!

"Cursed be the priest who has corrupted the souls of the faithful by the pestilential tenets of modern journalism! Let him be accursed in company with Dathan and Abiram, with Uzziah who profaned the ark, with Judas the traitor, and with other heretics, whom the Church has anathematized in times past.

"Cursed be the priest who has attacked that temporal power of the Pope which alone can secure the due exercise of his spiritual functions!

"Cursed be the priest who dares to teach the Pope and bench of bishops, and to pretend that he knows better than they what is best for the Church!

"Cursed be the insolent upstart! the heretic! the sacrilegious desecrator! the innovator! the journalist! the author of scandalous publications!

"Cursed be he, whosoever he may be, who shall approve of the doctrines of Julio de la Clayère! at this present, curé of Melles, in the diocese of T——."

And stepping into the middle of the room, and taking a copy of the Gospels in his hands, he added,

"Our choice this day is between Christ and Julio who has put him to shame. As for me, I separate from Julio. I anathematize him; I curse him to the uttermost, and cleave to Christ." (Shouts from all parts of the council chamber, "We cleave to Christ! Curses on Julio, the traitor! the apostate!")

This harangue, conceived in the exaggerated vehemence of mediæval phraseology, created an intense excitement among those who were present, and changed the grave and orderly gathering into an assembly of violent desperadoes.

Meanwhile the Archbishop of T—— threw a little cold water on the raging fire of indignation. He was not fond of the Bishop of ——, who bore the reputation of being the most enthusiastic ultramontanist in France. Moreover, a sentence in the recent discourse had been leveled at himself, to his very considerable displeasure. So he rose at once to reply to the wholesale cursing of the previous speaker:

"Most illustrious and most reverend fathers and very dear brethren, were we only invited to anathematize the imprudent and ill-considered teaching of M. l'Abbé Julio, I should be among the first to join the protest; nor, since the priest referred to belongs to my diocese, should I have left the task of denouncing him to one of my suffragans. But the question involved goes far

more deeply than this. Deferring most reverently as we do to the holy chair of St. Peter, and to the most venerable institution of the papacy, it would ill become us to arrogate to ourselves functions intrusted solely to the sacred congregation of the Index.

"In fact, we should expose ourselves to the imputation of presuming to set an example to the papal court; while a condemnation issued by us assembled here would be an encroachment on rights—held, I am aware, at one time by the bishops collectively, but transferred by them to the safer keeping of the successors of St. Peter, in order that all possible power might be concentrated in the pontifical hands.

"However becoming may be your indignant protest against those doctrines, the evil of which has been so ably demonstrated by the right reverend president of the doctrinal committee, I can not help thinking that we should manifest greater respect to Rome were we to leave it to the congregation of the Index to proscribe the heresies, while, at the same time, the condemnation would be more generally known through the Catholic world. Moreover, our conduct would undoubtedly, on general grounds, be more prudent and wise. Rome is gentleness itself in her dealing with offenses and offenders. She delights to leave it in the power of voluntary or almost involuntary transgressors to return of their own accord into the paths of truth. She is satisfied with a simple submission to her decrees, and avoids pushing to extremes those who, in many cases, have been unconsciously estranged from the faith.

"The Abbé Julio may be ranged among certain fanciful dreamers who, in their search after truth, have fallen into dangerous error. Meanwhile, his disposition is as amiable as his morals are unimpeachable; nor has he manifested the slightest obstinacy toward constituted authority. After the publication of the famous pamphlet, purporting to be an embodiment of the dying words of my illustrious predecessor, he gave me an assurance, in writing, of his complete submission to the ecclesiastical tribunals in that matter, and thus arrested the scandal which that silly book threatened to create. This document I would have submitted to your equitable and charitable judgment had I imagined for a moment that a matter which I think of little importance—and I ought to be an authority on the subject, seeing that it concerns myself—could possibly have been brought into such prominence among you." (Loud cries of "Hear, hear!" from all parts of the room.)

"I see, most illustrious fathers and very dear brethren, that what I have already said has placed this affair in a sufficiently satisfactory light to make it unnecessary for me to dilate upon it any farther. But there is one consideration which I am bound to urge upon you, at a time when insubordination is the order of the day, and that is, the importance of guarding against any proceedings calculated to drive impetuous natures to revolt against the Church.

"It would be well for us to remember the lessons of history, and diligently to apply them. There have been men who would have faithfully served the holy cause to which we ourselves are devoted had they been judiciously dealt with, but who, by the severity of the measures meted out to them, have been estranged from our midst, and urged into violent opposition.

"I demand, therefore, that the proposed anathemas be withdrawn, and that we leave it to the sacred congregation of the Index to deal with the Abbé Julio de la Clavière as, in its judgment, it may deem fittest and best."

The tact of this address is very evident. The archbishop rescued Julio by referring his case to a higher tribunal. He set down the furious bishop, and read all present a salutary lesson on moderation, when an opposite spirit was exhibiting such injurious effects. At the same time, he had in his mind his parting interview with Loubère, the remembrance of which remained with him day and night. Over and over again would he lie tossing on his bed under a horrible nightmare, shuddering at the terrible abbé, who would appear to him in his morbid dreams dressed in a blouse, holding a pistol to his head, and hissing out the stern, calm words, "Touch Julio, and you are a dead man."

The suggestions of the archbishop were accepted by the majority present, and inserted in the minutes; whereupon the business of the sitting terminated, and the president concluded with the customary prayer.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DARK CLOUD.

"At length my rebellious heart is quieted, but at how terrible a cost! In the depths of my anguish and struggle against an evil which a moment's quiet reflection might have enabled me more correctly to estimate, I little suspected the grave that was yawning at my feet, and threatening to swallow up Louise and all my earthly happiness. How could I dare to murmur at my lot, and abandon myself to a gloomy madness and sinful rebellion against God, or presume to be unhappy as long as she was spared? My God, pardon and spare me. Thou canst prolong her life; Thou canst take her hand, as of old the hand of the daughter of Jairus was taken, and bid her arise. But do I deserve such favor at Thy hands? Father, forgive my sinfulness; like Jesus in Gethsemane, I would say, 'If it be possible, remove this cup from me.'

"Her terrible cough has returned. During the three weeks that I was forever absenting myself from home, I did not notice its reappearance. Yesterday, however, when we were sitting at our literary work, an attack of it came on. Her handkerchief, which she put to her mouth, was dyed with blood. As I looked at

her, her large eyes shone with unnatural brilliancy, her cheeks were deadly pale, except where a hectic flush glowed in the centre. I seized her hand, and found it was burning with heat.

"You are feverish," I said.

"Yes, for the first time in the day," was her reply.

"Then you have often been feverish at night?"

"For the last fortnight, slightly."

"Oh, Louise," I exclaimed, bitterly distressed, 'you have been ill all this time, and never told me!'

"Didn't you notice it, dear?"

"How could I, dearest?"

"I saw you look wretched, Julio; your eyes were often fixed upon me in a strange, weird sort of way. When I have gone up to you, and tried to take your hand, and press it over my heart to still its passionate beatings, you have tried to get away from me; and I fancied it was because you wanted to hide your tears. I have read my sentence in your agitated face, Julio. I know I am going to die. Am I not?"

"So saying, she threw herself into my arms, and we wept together.

"No, dearest Louise," I said, 'you shall not die. God will never separate the brother and sister.'

"But the excitement had been too much for her—she was obliged to go up stairs.

"I followed her, and knelt by her bed, taking her hand in mine, and trying to calm her agitation. I assured her that my distress and altered manner had in no way arisen from her illness; that it was merely the result of a depression of spirits, very common among men who, in the fog of literary work, have failed to express their pent-up thoughts to their own satisfaction. My book on the temporal power, I reminded her, had been no easy task; and now that it was over, I was suffering from reaction. I had made vigorous efforts to overcome it, and hence my constant absence from home.

"But why didn't you tell me all this?" she asked. 'Why did you suffer alone? If I had not understood you too well, do you know I should have thought, more than once, that your affection for me was diminishing?'

"Oh, Louise, Louise, you never could have imagined that! it would, indeed, have been a cruel wrong.'

"She looked at me with an angel's smile.

"No," she said, slowly, 'I never doubted you; only you had got to be a very queer old boy, and I could not make you out.'

* * * * *

"I have had to call Dr. D. Alas! he gives me no hope. I knew that she was doomed; but to have my worst convictions confirmed authoritatively is terrible. There is always a vestige of hope at the bottom of the soul till science comes—calm, cold, and inexorable—and crushes it out. A month, perhaps a fortnight,

and I am to lose her—so the physician told me this morning; yet I remained quiet. I even summoned courage to go into her room with a smile upon my face, and a look of satisfaction. After all, he was bound to tell me the truth; and, decided as he was with me, he was gentleness itself with her. ‘In the state in which she is,’ he said, ‘it would be dangerous in the extreme to tell her her danger. She is suffering not only from disease of the chest and lungs, but her heart is affected as well, so that I can not reckon on her case with any certainty, as sudden emotion might carry her off at a moment’s notice. There is no doubt that her constitution is hopelessly injured, but her mind is suffering as well. Indeed, I should have succeeded in cheering her up if it had not been for that. But this other affection is so alarming and so unaccountable, and imparts such strange fancies and delusions to those whom it may seize, that it is *most difficult to deal with* them; indeed, as a rule, their nervous susceptibility is so acutely developed that every impression is perilous. You must keep careful watch over your looks and manner. The least inadvertent yielding to your feelings might prove her instant death.’

“I listened, motionless with dismay. My blood froze in my veins; all I gathered was that, by doing violence to every emotion within me, I might prolong her life for a little time. I pressed the physician’s hand, and promised obedience; hence my cheerful composure and sunny smile when I went into her room. Oh, how my looks belied my feelings! However, I succeeded in deluding her; she smiled, in return, a quiet, happy smile. We laughed together at our fears. She knew that I had been as much alarmed as herself at the recent attack; ‘but then,’ she said, ‘the doctor had so thoroughly explained it. She only wanted a few days’ rest. April weather was very uncertain; but the merry month of May would be sure to bring her round again. And then! oh, then, Julio,’ she added, ‘what glorious walks for us! what delicious rambles and flower-gatherings on the mountains, under rocks, down in the valleys, or by the cascades! for you sha’n’t go out alone any more, sir, I can tell you. And what beautiful botanical collections we shall be able to make, to replace those we might have formed while you were wandering over the world, like a knight-errant, in search of your sister. Julio, dear, the month of May will do wonders for me.’

“‘Yes, darling, it will, indeed.’

“And a voice within whispered to me, ‘Yes, you will be gathering flowers—beautiful flowers—in the month of May, to blossom on her grave!’

“And while it was whispering I was smiling; and when it had ceased I went smiling on.

“She never left her room again. The disease made rapid progress; her palpitations were incessant. The Holy Week and Easter services

called me away from her continually. Lord Jesus, my agony has been added to Thine. I have followed Thee to Calvary, and poured out my weepings there. The mournful wailings of the prophets, the veiled shrines, the extinguished tapers, the Church in her robes of sable—I felt the sublime poetry of these touching solemnities as I never felt it before. But the Resurrection Day, with its reviving glories, brought me no joy. The songs of triumph and jubilant allelujahs were on my lips, but my heart gave forth only the voice of anguish: ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.’

* * * * *

“Louise wished to join the Easter communion, and she asked me with a look that watched curiously for my reply, as well as for the expression that her request would call up on my face. I answered her with perfect naturalness of manner.

“‘The Easter services can be extended in the case of invalids.’

“‘No, no,’ she said, ‘I mustn’t delay. As soon as I can go out, I shall go to the church to thank God for having visited me here.’

“‘Poor darling. She received the communion with simple, humble, holy trust. My God, Thou knowest how I suffered!’

* * * * *

“*May 1st.*
“Before this month has expired I shall be alone, so the doctor tells me, and I feel that he is right. How much of these thirty-one days am I to spend with her?

“I can not understand the feelings that were aroused in me by the discovery that Louise was not my sister. Oh! if God were to preserve her life, how thankful I should be to cherish her with all a brother’s guileless love. But this happiness has been taken from me. She is doomed to die.

* * * * *

“To-day she is much better; the pulsations of her heart have calmed down. Why not hope that her life might be respited a little longer? I communicated my thoughts to the physician.

“‘Would you know the truth?’ he answered. ‘You would? Well, it’s a question not of weeks, but of days—should a sudden crisis come, which I much dread—even hours.’

“I thought till now that we had succeeded in keeping her ignorant of her approaching death, she seemed so calm. Though she did not form any plans or arrangements, as consumptive patients generally do, she still spoke of the future as a certainty, never seeming to assume that her days were numbered. Well, I was mistaken. She had never been deceived for a moment. That morning I found her better than the evening before. She had had such an excellent night, with a few hours of quiet sleep. In spite of all that had been said to me, I could not help hoping she might yet live. She read my thoughts in my face.

“‘You fancy I’m better, dear?’

" 'Yes, darling ; you're much better.'

" 'I am free from pain for a time, and that's a good deal to say ; but there's no other change. Look the thing in the face, dear, and don't hope against hope. Stop ! here's that pain at my heart back again.'

" 'Louise, dear, dear Louise, what are you saying ?'

" 'I say,' she replied, in a hurried tone, and fixing her large eyes upon me, 'that we ought not to try and deceive ourselves during the little time that I shall be spared to remain with you. It is yours, dear brother, to teach me how to prepare for death. We've had enough of mutual dissimulation, a trial for both of us ; let us attempt it no longer. Oh, Julio,' she added, bursting into tears, 'I'm sorry to leave this happy life and the pleasant sunshine, the flowers, valleys, and mountains, the glorious world blossoming around me, whose hidden beauties you have taught me to admire, but what is their loss compared with the loss of you ? Who can tell what trials may yet be in store for you ? That book of yours, so full of Gospel teaching, and so tempered with all its truthfulness by reverential love for a poor, tottering old man, will cost you dear. And I shall no longer be at your side to soothe your sufferings by sharing them with you.'

" Her voice grew husky. Her eyes shone more brilliantly than ever. The palpitations became very violent.

" 'Do not cry, Julio,' she said, putting her arms round my neck. 'I have always thought that disembodied spirits return to those they love, and linger near them. So I shall come back to you, Julio, for you are the only one in the world that I care for. And now think of your office. It's high time.'

" 'I understood her only too well. . . . She received from my trembling hands the last sacraments, and I summoned sufficient courage to utter the sublime invitation to one so tenderly beloved,

" 'Sors de ce monde, âme Chrétienne !'

" The service over, she lay perfectly quiet for a time.

" 'I am well—quite well,' she said, after a pause. 'Let me speak a little ; it doesn't tire me. We are waiting death together, Julio : it will only separate us for a very short time. You have suffered, and will suffer much yet ; and this prolonged agony will do its deadly work. You will soon join me, dearest brother.'

" 'She had a fearful night. 'This pain,' she said, in a low voice, 'is very trying for both of us ; but, at all events, we are not compelled to disguise our sufferings from each other.'

" 11th May.

" 'Listen to me,' she exclaimed, after two hours of very deep repose. 'I want to speak to you for a moment of him ; you know whom I mean, though I never mention his name. He has done me grievous harm ; but I forgive him. For a long time I have not been able to imagine how it was I ever loved him so much.'

" Her breathing became more oppressive. I

raised her tenderly, and she rested her head on my bosom.

" 'It is sweet,' she said, 'to die in your arms. How could I have desired another love than yours ? In this last moment, I see plainly that you had my real heart ; that other attachment was but an infatuation.'

" Was it so that she had learned the secret on the threshold of eternity ?

" Had I asked her she could not have come back to tell me, for I was imprinting my passionate kiss on the lips of the dead."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CARDINAL'S HAT.

THE precautions taken by the council to prevent any of its measures transpiring proved futile. Oaths are easily taken, but not so easily kept. A deliberative assembly, though it only consist of two members, is in its very nature rash ; it can't, somehow, help blabbing.

What occurred in connection with Julio at the council of Limoux created a great stir in the religious world. Some thought that the archbishop had acted very wisely ; others, a bishop or two among them, opined differently.

Meanwhile the preparations were complete for the great episcopal manifestation of the 8th of June, 1862.

Once before the Ultramontanes had contrived to get the Catholic bishops to Rome, to be present at the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The episcopate, ignoring its rights, signed its own downfall and proclaimed papal omnipotence in thus countenancing the promotion by the Pope of a controverted opinion to the level of an article of faith. Never had the worthy prelates been more skillfully hoodwinked since the earliest days of their episcopacy, all unprepared as they were, in their simplicity, to recognize in the whole proceeding a trap for involving them in the establishment not so much of the privileges of the Virgin as of the infallibility of the Pope. The measures had been devised a long time by the Jesuits ; and while the Pope was at Gaeta, worried out of his life by the recent casualties, those nearest his person availed themselves adroitly of the occasion to suggest the expediency, at a time when the temporal power was represented as tottering to the ground, of exalting the spiritual to the skies by the promulgation of an article of faith.

Pius IX., having compromised himself very seriously with the Austrians and other friends of the Ultramontane party by his attempts at liberal government, felt the necessity in which he was involved of giving some guarantee for his return to the old system of absolutism. Hence his eager concurrence in the measure proposed, and the issue from Gaeta of an invitation to the Catholic bishops to assist the Holy See with their counsels on the subject.

The bishops were amazed at the dispatch,

imagining that the Pope had been occupying his leisure by reviewing this old theological quarrel. On consulting their curés, they found them as ignorant as themselves of a question which had been shelved for ages past. The worthy priests, however, had more than once overheard old women repeat the accustomed formula, "Marie conçue sans péché, priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous;" so they gave it out as their judgment that the parish verdict was on the Virgin's side.

This was all Rome wanted. Not a single bishop or vicar had detected the Jesuit plot. Meanwhile, the fathers themselves were occupied with making most erudite researches. One of the most illustrious of their body—illustrious afterward for his separation—Father Passaglia, proved, in two or three folio volumes, that the word "immaculate" occurred in all the French and Latin writers from the time of St. Jean Damascene. True, St. Paul had said that all were born in sin; St. Augustine testified to a similar effect; popes, even, in the Church's palmiest days, denounced the dogma about to be pronounced. What of that? To contradict St. Paul, to give St. Augustine the lie, to stultify the earlier teaching of St. Peter's chair, nothing simpler—a mere bagatelle, that, to the Jesuit mind. Who reads St. Paul, St. Augustine, or papal sermons nowadays? It would take more than that to stop the sons of Loyola. The Pope, who hadn't time for books, agreed with them, the bishops agreed with the Pope, and the Catholic world was immediately commanded to agree with the bishops.

This view of matters once established, the Jesuit manœuvres prospered, through the efforts of the *Univers*, beyond the highest expectations. Every bold priest who, after careful consideration of the doctrine, showed any anxiety to think farther about it before he believed it, was condemned at once to the most pitiless persecution. Take the Abbé Laborde, for instance, a man of blameless reputation, who eventually died of starvation in Paris, a martyr to his honest convictions.

The Ultramontanes had prearranged all their plans, and, as soon as the bishops were assembled, addressed them in a long oration, the substance of which was:

"Venerable fathers in God, you are not come here to aid the deliberation of the Pope as brother bishops; you are present to act as his acolytes, and lend a finish to the display. The Pope will see about the doctrine; you have nothing to do with it."

The worthy fathers had provided themselves with mitres blazing with precious stones, grand carved silver-gilt crosses, and copes of cloth of gold. They would not have missed, on any account, showing off their finery under Michael Angelo's cupola. They were assisting at the proclamation of an article of faith; so they ought to be well dressed.

The episcopals of the twentieth century will make a note of this.

What transpired on December 8, 1864, was not enough, by way of a surprise, to the Catholic world, so the Ultramontane party determined on repeating the experiment in 1862. The papacy, more domineering than ever, resolved to show that, whatever might have been the results of the revolution to the temporal power, the spiritual was as lively as ever. The bishops were sent for once more, trooped in as obediently as before, brought the same beautiful wardrobes, graced a ceremony at which no less than forty thousand francs' worth of wax candles were burnt, and, without having pluck enough to meet in council, showed themselves as submissive as ever to the papacy, which they were then supremely exalting over their own heads by signing a round-robin in the shape of a political declaration that the temporal rule was indispensable—little dreaming, in their short-sightedness, that a day is at hand when, in order to be logical, they will have to proclaim the opposite.

Not that Monseigneur Le Cricq troubled himself with any such profound reflections. The life of an archbishop, he reflected, was very short. What mattered it to him whether his successors preserved their rank and dignity, or whether popes were, or were not, omnipotent. He must see about being cardinal at once, never mind what happened after.

He had played his cards well. The council of Limoux had created a considerable sensation in the official world; nor was it from a mere chance source that government received their report of the archbishop's conduct on that occasion. Indeed, it was currently reported that the most reverend himself was their informant; nor did he fail to impress them with a suitable idea of his high spiritual tolerance, moderation, and good sense. His skillful resistance of the fanatical outbreak of the suffragan on that occasion secured his triumph. His friend, the general, made the most of his generous treatment of the persecuted priest. The desired consent was obtained; a dispatch reached the happy man to the effect that he was appointed cardinal.

This was much indeed, but it was not all; there was Rome to win over yet. North of the mountains, where the wind was genial, pleasant, and tolerant, monseigneur had to blow accordingly; south, where it set in from a totally opposite quarter, monseigneur had to set in from a totally opposite quarter too. Above all, he had to hate Gallicanism, that couldn't be done without—Gallicanism, the doctrine of Bossuet, Fleury, La Luzerne, Affre, and many others who have declined to believe in pontifical infallibility.

Now Le Cricq troubled himself as much about Bossuet as he did about Bellarmine. All his care was to get hold of his hat. He was received most warmly at Rome. The French ambassador had applied for the new dignity in his behalf, and the request had been at once granted. At the commencement of his visit he

was here, there, and every where, calling in all directions, first on the general of the Jesuits, secondly on the Pope's domestic prelates, thirdly on all the cardinals and bishops conspicuous at Rome for their hostility to France, and their inextinguishable ultramontaniam.

Things were progressing as smoothly as a marriage bell, when who should arrive at Rome but the discomfited suffragan of Limoux; not after a hat—he had no idea of that—but on a little project of his own—the extinction of Gallicanism and civilization generally.

This dignitary, as obstinate as any mule or monk, and as bloody-minded as the most bigoted inquisitor, had an audience of the Pope, and told him of the archbishop's doings at the council, and of the way in which he had screened the enemy of the temporal power. He was fatally successful; there was a slip for Le Cricq between the cup and the lip.

That most reverend and most illustrious personage, who had been basking in papal sunshine, was not a little astonished, on his second visit to the Vatican, to find that an east wind had set in, with a total change in the weather. Domestic prelates, the cardinal minister, cardinals of the Ultramontane section, became suddenly reserved and frigid.

"An enemy hath done this," was his agreeable soliloquy. "I must find out all about it."

His agent at Rome went to work most carefully to procure information. He had some little difficulty at first, but eventually he succeeded in bringing him the following news:

"Your friend has been the Bishop of ———, who has kindly acquainted the Pope that you had absolutely defended, in full council, an enemy of the temporal power. The Pope made no reply, but was evidently much annoyed.

"The same evening his Holiness observed to Monsignor B., one of his most intimate domestic prelates,

"I was going to make a curious cardinal."

It was as much as the archbishop could do to sustain his sinking spirits under this terrible revelation.

"What must I do, my dear abbé?" he exclaimed.

"Do, monseigneur! let the storm pass over you. Sham to be dead; allow yourself to be forgotten for a few days; disappear, in fact."

"A capital idea." And the holy man, giving up his previous amusements, went to the Gesù to engage in the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

"One of the best dodges I ever heard of," muttered the abbé; "an Italian couldn't have done better."

The lucky retreat was a thorough success. It terminated on the 7th of June, the day before the great solemnity.

The next morning the General of the Jesuits called on the Pope to congratulate him on the various glorious events that had transpired; among other things, on the piety that had been

manifested by the French bishops during their stay in Rome.

"We have been especially struck, Holy Father," he said, "by his highness, Monseigneur Le Cricq, archbishop of T——, who, with great humility, solemnized a retreat at the Gesù. Such devotion as he manifests for your Holiness and the papal throne! He explained to me that his motive in interfering with a proposition which had arisen at the council of Limoux, to condemn the doctrine of the notorious Julio de la Clavière then and there, arose simply from a desire to reserve the right of judgment to the Congregation of the Index. At the same time, he so worthily maintained his point that the council abandoned their project; while he himself is at present denouncing the author and his writings to the cardinal prefect of the Index, and preparing an interdict against him."

A smile from the Pope assured the very reverend general that he had gained his point.

Two days afterward the *Catholic Atlas* contained the following paragraph:

"Our news from Rome is full of interest. The sovereign pontiff continues to testify his high esteem for the French bishops; indeed, a telegraphic dispatch just received conveys the intelligence that Monseigneur Le Cricq, archbishop of T——, has just been named a cardinal. The Pope is desirous of rewarding in his person the unbounded attachment to the Holy See manifested by the Gallican episcopacy. Gallicanism itself is extinguished utterly, and Roman supremacy shines out as a realized fact. There is but one chief shepherd, with faithful servants round him, illustrating the glorious truth of Christian unity, and ceasing to exult in the questionable glory of independent and empty honors.

"From the same dispatch we gather that the new cardinal is about to submit to the society of the Index the writings of M. Julio de la Clavière, a character too well known to our readers to need description.

"Previously to doing so, however, his eminence notified to the heretical offender, who was a curé in his diocese, that he was formally interdicted. We can not speak too highly of such pious zeal. The time has come when any farther tolerance of men whose proceedings scandalize the Church becomes positive complicity in their guilt. The French episcopacy is entering on a new path, of which this decided measure is an encouraging indication. Heretics will at length understand that their heresies will be visited and crushed out by the Church with merciless severity."

His eminence, Cardinal Le Cricq, left his humble retreat at the Gesù to assume his red robe of office; then, crossing the Mediterranean, he hurried home, and made a triumphal entry into T——.

His next step was to address a pompous manifesto to the clergy and faithful of his diocese. After having worked for his new dignity during

three years of restless activity, he had the coolness to pen the following stereotyped phrases :

"MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN,—Providence, following out its impenetrable designs, has deigned to summon us to one of the highest dignities of the Roman Church at a time when we were engrossed with the discharge of the duties of our humble apostolate among you. We have spared no effort to decline an honor deserved by others so much more than by ourselves. Our remonstrances were, however, in vain ; so we are compelled to submit to the will of him who is, to us, the representative of God on earth.

"If, however, this illustrious trust, which we so little aspired to, is a favor of which we feel ourselves supremely unworthy, we can not the less accept the great obligations of gratitude to the Holy See which such a distinguished mark of confidence must necessarily entail," etc., etc., etc.

This affecting document threw the religious world of T— into a condition of ecstasy. "What profound modesty !" said the old ladies. "What edifying humility ; what unprecedented indifference to worldly honors ! The Pope was evidently compelled to thrust the hat upon his head."

The world thought otherwise, as will appear from the subjoined, and the world generally knows the rights of things :

"MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN,—'The impenetrable designs of Providence,' which have decorated our head with a cardinal's hat, are General . . . , who has great influence at court. To please the French government, we played the Liberal ; to please Rome, we played the Ultramontane. In return for such a troublesome task, it is but right and fitting that we should accept the sixty thousand livres attached to our rank as cardinal and senator.

"Whereupon we give you our benediction !"

A copy of the squib was inclosed to the cardinal himself in a splendid envelope, with a fine seal of red wax. It had been posted at Paris, to insure, with such a brilliant and imposing appearance, safe consignment to the hands of his eminence.

Such was the vengeance the world took on the cowardly time-serving of Monseigneur Le Cricq.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST BLOW.

WHILE the grand old capital of the south was ringing out a festive welcome to his eminence on his return from Rome ; while the whole population, in holiday dress, was thronging the promenades, public places, and thoroughfares, from the station to the centre of the town, in order to see the empurpled dignitary in the first blush of his triumph ; while every parish stee-

ple was giving forth its brazen clamor ; while maidens, young and fair, and robed in white, were gathering under their banners ; while schools, convents, colleges, societies of every kind, reverend fathers of the august company of Jesuits, their brows clothed with the pride of success, were swelling the conqueror's train, two carriages, drawn by two strong horses, and driven by two mountaineers accustomed to ply between Luchon and Tarbes, took the road to St. Béat.

On the front seat of the first, under a kind of leather hood, sat a man still young, but with a grave, thoughtful countenance—his forehead furrowed by suffering, his face pale and wan. He was dressed in a light overcoat, and sought shelter from the fierce sun-rays under the protecting covering.

It was Julio, the victim of the curses of the council of Limoux—the poor priest who had been interdicted by a sentence launched from Rome at the moment that the cardinal elect was meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell.

Not a murmur had escaped him. The letter announcing the fact reached him at the moment that he was about to celebrate mass. The church bell had sounded, as usual, and two or three old men, with a few pious women, were assembled. Ever eager to obey, his first thought was to lay aside at once his sacred vestments. Fearful, however, of perplexing the little congregation, to whom his conduct would necessarily appear strangely unaccountable—like his Master quitting Gethsemane for Calvary—he ascended the altar-steps to offer for the last time the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist with the sacrifice of his life.

No tears fell on the book from which he read, in solemn, earnest tones, the preparatory prayer. Brave and self-possessed, he offered himself to God, resembling one of those old warriors of Thermopylæ, who stood where the pass was narrowest, counting it all joy that their country should have their blood.

Julio, too, was dying, adoring the purposes of Providence in the cruel sentence which had struck him down, interceding fervently for the ambitious prelate who had purchased the purple at so disgraceful a price ; pleading for all his enemies in the Church, for the fanatical bigots who had hunted him down with insatiable revenge ; praying, too, for the venerable pontiff elected to be the last to circle his brow with the diadem of the Cæsars, instead of the less arrogant mitre of a bishop of Rome.

Yet, his heart well-nigh broke, his voice faltered, the pain of unutterable anguish overpowered his soul as he pronounced the touching words wherein memory is preserved of those departed hence, and thought that among the grass and flowers blooming on the grave of Louise he was never to kneel again.

"O my God !"—such was his prayer in the few moments devoted by the service to that solemn remembrance—"they deprive me of every

thing, even of the sorrowful solace of lingering where she lies. Yet take Thou this heart, so bruised and broken, with the last prayer of Thy ministering servant never again to stand at Thy altar. Mine be Thy rest and peace, and glorious meeting soon with her who is gone before!"

And again he was composed and tranquil, as though the angel of hope had returned to gladden him. His voice thrilled through the church as he uttered the prayer of all prayers, and realized that God was indeed his Father. With him the *paternoster* was an infant's dying murmur breathed into a mother's ear—the song of the swan—the sweetest and the last—the priest's last utterance ere his robe was stripped from his shoulders.

Before daylight next morning, the villagers being totally ignorant of his sorrowful departure, he left for Tarbes. He had completed his traveling arrangements during the night, and set out forever from the last parish that was to know him as a tender-hearted minister of the sanctuary and shepherd of the flock, purposing to seek an asylum in some secluded mountain village. The truly great are never utterly cast down. When man has done his worst, there is still for their solace the repose of nature and the peace of God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RECLUSE OF THE VALLEY OF CAMPAN.

JULIO's health, painfully shattered as it was, had sustained a terrible shock from the death of Louise. He had, indeed, nerved himself to submit with dignity to the cruel sentence of banishment from his office, but the last farewell to his sister's grave proved a trial so terrible that he never recovered from its effects. The physicians of Tarbes recommended his selecting some very sheltered and quiet valley, with a southern aspect, as his future home, and implored him in every possible way to avoid excitement and agitation, which would render all medical skill abortive.

Intimately acquainted with the entire neighborhood of Luchon, he turned his steps now toward the Hautes Pyrénées, a region where he had never been before. After the dark, solemn ravines in the centre of the chain, there spread out before him, in his new home, wide, sunny valleys, the steep sides of which were clothed with endless verdure. He was still in a mountain land, but flowers and foliage softened the awe of its sublimity, while winter cold and summer heat were each subdued.

The Valley of Campan was the spot which he chose as his home. He was fortunate enough to light upon a little cottage about two kilometres from Campan, with a pleasant orchard round it, and a wide meadow behind, while at the bottom of a meadow at the back dashed on the impetuous Gave. He took the house, and, within a week after he left Melles, was comfort-

ably installed, one of his first acts being to write to his old friends the bishop, M. de Leich, and the noble-hearted Loubère.

Unfortunately, M. de Leich was at that moment occupied with a rather strong desire to get on in the world. His reply savored of this ambition, for the realization of which the aid of the new cardinal was very necessary. So its tone was cold; its regrets over Julio's want of judgment many and vehement; and its affectation of patronizing interest at the close all but insufferable.

"Deserted again," said Julio to himself.

The Bishop of A—— was colder still; he contented himself with advising Julio to bow to his diocesan and implore his pity.

"Scirent si ignoscere manes," said Julio, sorrowfully. The tone of the letter convinced him that the only bishop who had had the courage to call him his friend was bidding him quiet farewell, with nothing to offer but empty pity.

Not so Loubère:

"They have murdered you, my dear fellow," he said; "they have murdered you! Were it not that I feared the pain I might cause you, I should have gone to my friend the cardinal, demanding an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; and recalling to his recollection a certain promise he made me, from which I don't exactly see how he can possibly be absolved; only I know it would break your heart to think that you had been the means of my executing righteous vengeance on that most unrighteous head. So you stay my arm; I am arrested by a consideration from your tender, conscientious compassion, and by that alone. But a day is coming when I shall have to deal with him. It is right such cowardly poltroons should know that there is justice on earth, as well as that more terrible vengeance of heaven, the doom of cowards and traitors, of unnatural miscreants who deal in their brothers' blood.

"I shall attend to him in due course, and favor him with a bit of my mind; but there is no hurry. We'll leave the good cardinal alone for a week or two, to admire his purple in peace.

"Meanwhile, quitting him, let me implore you, dear, dear friend, to take care of your invaluable health.

"You will believe my heart-words of yearning, love, and sympathy. Whenever you want me, whatever be your need, make but one sign, and you'll find me at your side. All I am and all I have is yours—yours unreservedly to use as you will.

"Your friend,

LOUBÈRE."

Julio left the bishop's and magistrate's letters unanswered, declining their advice, and ignoring their presumptuous egotism. To them he was under the ban, so he left them alone; but he poured out his whole heart to his faithful and brave friend.

"Give up all your schemes of vengeance against the cardinal, dear friend; he is no enemy of mine; he has been but an instrument in

the hands of a merciful Providence. You are right in supposing that it would be an unutterable grief to me were you to visit him with a single reproach for his conduct in my case. He would think that it was at my instigation that you were taking a step which I should decline as a Christian and as a man most anxious to maintain his personal dignity.

"It is your friendship for me that leads you astray on this point: so generous a feeling, dear Loubère, ought not to instigate you to an ungenerous action.

"And now that I have delivered myself of this little lecture, let me thank you for your cheery, warm-hearted letter, the first and only one that has greeted me with solace in my lonely home. I have read it, and shall read it again and again: let me have plenty more; this last friendship left to me—this last soul-communion with one like yourself, will cheer me in my utter solitude.

"A thousand thanks for your generous offers. I trust I shall never need that special kind of aid; but it is not the less sweet, for all that, to know that there is one ready to offer me the earnings of his daily toil.

"Adieu, dear friend.

"Ever yours,

JULIO."

The arrival of an interdicted priest was quite an event in the peaceful, secluded valley where our hero had established himself. On the following Sunday, as the mountaineers were thronging the church path at the summons of the service bell, he passed through the various groups to a seat at the end of the nave, close to the holy-water stand. There, silent and devout, absorbed in his own meditations, he joined reverently in the prayers of the celebrant, among the lowliest of the faithful assembled to worship.

Rustics are not clever at fanaticism, and with the exception of some five or six amiable reproductions of the old Mother Caprède, the entire assembly bestowed looks of respectful sympathy on the gentle victim of priestly tyranny.

He had intended at first to present himself at the church in his soutane, to kneel at the foot of the altar, and join in the service there. An interdict is simply a prohibition from the exercise of ministerial functions, without interfering in the slightest with the privilege of participation in the sacraments of the Church; nor is it any positive disgrace, except when it has been incurred as a penalty for acts in themselves morally disgraceful. No reflection of such a character rested on Julio's blameless Christian life. He might have safely assisted the curé of Campan at the Sunday mass, and, hindered though he was from officiating as priest, have served as acolyte; nor would it have been other than a solace to him to have discharged the office of a little child at a father's feet in handing him the sacred elements. To such a duty he would joyfully have condescended, and with a man of a different stamp from the curé of Campan might easily have fulfilled it. M. Barnabé Capdepore,

however, was one of the most devoted worshippers of the *Catholic Atlas*, and the most ardent disciple of Ultramontanism to be found in the Pyrenees. To him a priest, honored with a place in the *Index*, and proscribed for his writings, was an agent of Lucifer—a creature who, in the good old times, would have been greeted with stake, and fagot, and flame.

Hence Julio's presence in the church Sunday after Sunday, notwithstanding that it was so thoroughly unobtrusive, vexed his righteous soul. Had the man been punished for profligacy he would have pitied and patronized him.

But as it was his creed that had ruined him, he commenced at once to hate him with cordial earnestness—to such an unlimited extent, that, at the moment of the sprinkling of holy water, when the congregation, and Julio among them, was prostrate before the altar, his reverent eyes shot out glances of fiery indignation. Julio almost thought once that he was going to send the sponge at his head.

In the pulpit he became decidedly personal. The enemies of God and the Pope, the wretched priests who countenanced revolutions; and, on the other hand, the exemplary Catholics who stuck up manfully and well for every imaginable and even unimaginable right of the chair of St. Peter—episcopal cyclicals and the grotto of Lourdes—such were the themes of his discourse—a convenient peg on which to hang disparaging reference to one not specified by name, indeed, but simply as the accursed of the Council of Limoux.

Meanwhile, as the excellent curé was somewhat ambitious as well as fanatical, and desirous withal of a better living, he thought it wouldn't be amiss if he aired his zeal a little in the presence of his superiors, and thus turned Julio's affairs to profitable account. So he marched off to Monseigneur of Tarbes, to whom he proceeded to introduce himself as a right valorous defender of the faith, observing how heart-broken he was at having a recalcitrant priest in his parish—one who had dared, in fact, to object to Rome. He was stricken to the dust, he remarked, at the bare thought that the civil laws permitted so flagrant a delinquent to insult the assemblies of the faithful by his most objectionable presence; and declared that, should he take the liberty of dying in the place without first retracting in full all his grievous heresies, it would be his—M. Barnabé Capdepore's—painful duty to refuse him Christian burial.

On the occasion of the earliest clerical conference at Bagnères-de-Bigorre, he enlarged fully and feelingly on this most distressing topic in the presence of all the curés of the canton. By some, who knew their man, the object of all this zeal was pretty soon detected, while other soft-headed bigots applauded it as praiseworthy in the extreme. They were not radically bad, yet they managed, in some curious way or other, to arrive at the conclusion that so unmitigated a miscreant ought to be trampled under foot.

Julio, all the time, submitted to their growing

malevolence with his usual gentleness and composure. He had managed to hold his own in the presence of episcopal and archiepiscopal might, so he wasn't likely to give in before these little people. He knew that their malice arose from perverted judgment, and not from any natural vindictiveness or spitefulness of disposition.

And yet his spirit was sorely distressed at this unbrotherly greeting from poor fellows like himself, trodden down under the hoof of despotism and Pharisaic tyranny. He had fought for them; and, could he but have received a hearing in the Church, he would have worked out their freedom. And yet, though he had thus sought to be their true friend, his only reward, even from the most moderate, was the reputation of a fool, while bigotry denounced him as an enemy of Catholicism and fit subject for the Inquisition.

According to a general law, which decrees, as a fact of experience, that the savior should be the sufferer—the man who would bear away the miseries of others—the scape-goat in his ill-rewarded effort.

Thus passed August and September. Julio occupied five or six hours of each day in writing, intellectual exercise being the one supreme refreshment of great minds. If it be true that earliest efforts are always disappointing, how intense, by contrast, the after joy, when the true idea that the thought conceived is expressed in worthy words. That joy was his.

What he left behind him will recall to some the best passages in the works of Lamennais—more chaste and tender even than the writings of that master spirit. The one had loved and suffered; while with the other it had not been so, though his pages display, most undoubtedly, traces not only of a brilliant genius, but also of a sensitive and affectionate spirit.

What fragments we have found appear, from their matter, and from the notes accompanying them, to have been intended by their author for insertion in a work which he had been anxious to publish on the destinies of Christianity. We give our readers a few of them—perhaps the last he ever wrote.

CHAPTER XII.

REMAINS.

"In this silent retreat, where the world is shut out, and I am alone with God, I have often meditated on the future destiny of the militant Church.

"Were I to judge by what I see, or argue for the coming time by the lamentable exhibition of the present, I should come to the conclusion that Catholicism was rapidly nearing its decline.

"Confronted, after the mighty agitations of the eighteenth century, by a people ready to defy the spirit of priestly tyranny—so opposed to that milder system which obtained such wide success

in the days of Bossuet and Fénelon—the clergy have persisted in the effort to seize the bull by the horns, and storm the enemy into submission. 'You ask for reason,' they say; 'we will compel you, without much ado, to swallow what we choose to force upon you. You insist on the onward march of intelligence, of toilsome investigation of scientific and other discoveries. We will anathematize this pseudo-civilization of which you boast. We will bring back the days when men shivered, in their ignorance, before the almighty priest. We will proclaim aloud—through bishops in their charges, through curés in their sermons, through preachers in their impassioned harangues—that liberty is a curse; that there is but one claim—the claim of God—expounded by the priest; so that women now, and their sons by-and-by, shall credit what we declare, while we bring an obstinate race to its knees. If need be, we will ply you with all the tricks and terrors of a day gone by; God shall be depicted to you as a God of terror, hell as yawning to receive you. So will we force you to submission, and wring out of you the cry, 'Have compassion on us and help us.'"

"This fierce design, worthy of the brain of a delirious monk, has seduced an entire race of priests. They have adopted, with feverish earnestness, their unnatural and impossible scheme for the world's conversion. Disciples of Christ as they profess to be, they have ignored His words, and called down fire from heaven on a sinful and stiff-necked generation. There they are, borne on by their wild enthusiasm, like Eastern fakirs, urging weak and superstitious men to the very strangest excesses of mysticism; imposing on them a ritual overburdened with meretricious ceremonies—the offspring of the long, weary night of mediæval ignorance.

"What, then, can be expected from such a system and such a priesthood but what must logically be inferred from the present position of Catholicism? Either modern ideas must go back and bow before this unreasoning rule, or the clergy must advance and progress with them. It is scarcely possible to see beyond the first step in this terrible dilemma.

"'Are we to recede?' the world will ask, in the pride of its discoveries, the activity of its daily struggles, the vision of a horizon beyond, bright with glory and greatness; 'are we to abandon the present and sacrifice the future, that we may return to days of ignorance and superstition? Impossible! Better worth, a thousand times, what we hold in our hands. Bad bargain indeed to make such a pitiful exchange!'

"'And are we to advance?' rejoice the priests; 'advancement is fatal to our dreams of power, our system of double rule? Cease your idle request; we can not and will not grant it.'

"Then comes the question, 'Who is to give way?' and the answer is, 'Neither.' Is it asked whether the war will be interminable? No; there will be an end and a victory. That that victory will be over an entire epoch, the most

powerful in intellectual development that the world has known, is not very easy to believe.

"The only conclusion, therefore, is, that the priests will be the victims. The day of outlandish pretensions, as set forth in its daily organs, expired, a day of darkness and gloom will succeed.

"The clergy seem utterly incapable of perceiving the void with which they are surrounding themselves: a crowd of routine pietists follow them to their churches; children, led blindfolded by a father's hand, lavish on them enthusiastic worship—they ask nothing more; women take them as their secret guides, revealing to them the recesses of their hearts. A few men come and tell them that they are the light of the world. With this varied testimony to their excellence, how can they be expected to believe that they are losing their hold upon the people, more especially at a time when there are not wanting isolated tokens of mighty influence, and powerful reciprocal interchanges with illustrious potentates, who have enabled them to crush down the most determined opposition?

"And yet this delusion will come to an end one day. The child, become a man, will renounce his early credulity—ay, even the faith of his infancy, which only lodged in his head and never reached his heart. The woman who gloried in the confessional and the most unreserved priestly dominion will find that a Church can not go on without men, and be disconsolate at the wholesale male desertion. And as soon as these facts have become palpable to the priest himself—as soon as freedom of thought has asserted its dominion and compelled recognition, this hitherto impracticable mortal—of the full opinion, at present, that to doubt him is to sin against the Holy Ghost—will be driven to submission, and raise a faint and faltering cry of 'We have made a mistake; the world was not made for the priesthood, but the priesthood for the world.' On that day, if such a resurrection to a better life is indeed possible, there will be an arrest in the blind path to ruin. But ere that morning dawn—ere popes, cardinals, and bishops—the whole array, in short, of those who call themselves, and make others call them, princes—of priests accustomed to make their flocks bow down to them as a right of their office—ere these consent to become small, to be humble apostles like the fishermen of Galilee, lowly missionaries in the great future economy, living the quiet domestic life of Peter, or the toiling life of Paul at Corinth, what struggles and wrestlings must transpire!

"It is no easy thing for a large organized body to admit that it has been in great error, even in human affairs; how much more in religious matters? It will be no light task for those who have claimed to be infallible to allow that they not only made the greatest mistake in doing so, but, under their assumed infallibility, perpetrated a multitude of errors all but involving the ruin of the Church.

"No, my brother priests, you may be exem-

plary, but you are not infallible. Christian truth asserts that Christ is in the bosom of His Church, to guard her from the dominion of error—a sublime privilege which you have misinterpreted, and the rights of which you have arrogated to yourselves, being not the Church, but only a part of it. You have developed your theory in the Pope *quâ* the Church, the bishops *quâ* the diocese, and the curé *quâ* the confessional, and you are going to be well punished for your pains. The faster the world grows, the less it will require to be dandled in your arms. Such infant treatment was all but unknown in the first ages of Christianity, so it isn't wanted now. The Gospel is a law of liberty, and the present state of things, in which the priest appears as a mediator, with full powers, between God and man, would never have been brought about but for the reaction consequent on the barbarism which commenced, in the fifth century, to devastate the world.

"The farther civilization advances, the more rapidly will this anomaly disappear. But will the priest be wise in his generation, or will he misinterpret the signs of this coming time, as he is now misinterpreting or ignoring the present liberal movement—interpreting it as an insolent rebellion against God, a struggle between Christ and anti-Christ?

"Many of us have thought for a long time that it might be possible to educate the clergy into a wiser and happier mind; hence our efforts through the press—alas! utter failures. Meanwhile others will succeed us, with the same hopes and dreams, to encounter the same obstacles. Long, long will it be before the priest will understand his lesson. Till then, all efforts to harmonize him with modern social life will prove impotent. He will have to submit to the evidence of facts, to sacrifice, and self-denial. But no faction ever yet dismembered itself or surrendered even its smallest fancied privilege without a vehement struggle. So we wait for a sign; and when the fortress has been stormed and taken, then will be the time for constructing a new edifice out of the ruins of the old.

"But as to how this transition is to be effected—whether it will crown a revolutionary civil war, or be developed gradually, as by a quiet social reform, God alone knows. But of this we may be confident, meanwhile, that the mind of man will tear itself, inevitably, from the spider web of a dominant priesthood; that the clerical aristocracy will ere long be trampled under foot; that from that utter subjugation it will never recover. While I write I see Evangel Truth rising from the overthrow, disencumbered of what once disfigured her form—glorious and immortal, the unperishable possession of the Church and the world.

"And all this in a speedily approaching golden future."

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTER FROM JULIO TO LOUBÈRE.

"Campan, 10th October, 1862.

"DEAR FRIEND,—September has closed upon me, leaving me wretchedly ill. I have a first-rate doctor from Bagnères-de-Bigorre; he tries to deceive me with the belief that I am improving, but I can see through all his vain attempts. He naturally enough treats me as he would any other patient, as, indeed, he ought to do, were it not for those mental attacks from which I am constantly suffering. I am often very weak. Four days ago I lay an entire afternoon on a couch in a dead faint, and I have been carried about as though I had no life left in me. However, I'm a little better now—strong enough, in fact, to write to you; now and then I have decided rallies, but I am in that state that I never know which letter will be my last.

"Dear Loubère, you are my only friend in this world—the only one I love to think of, as I draw up to the golden gates of a better. I am not afraid to die. I know I leave my great work in a most imperfect state; indeed, I can not say whether even the twentieth century will see it any farther developed. Some one will be found to take it in hand when I am gone. Progress is as much a law of religion as it is of all life; the dead alone are motionless and still. In the earliest ages of Christianity a good priest once discovered and enunciated that truth. His name was Vincent de Lérins; but men have managed to forget the teacher and his teaching together.

"So we shall have to go back to this doctrine, and constitute it the watchword of a new theological school. A day will come when the flag of progress will be unfurled by priestly hands, and religious and social advancement be held to be indissoluble. Indeed, the two must grasp each other by the hand, and march on together. It won't do for the one to deny the existence of the other any longer.

"Those truths, in which the Church's salvation is involved, I have endeavored slightly to illustrate. You know that Rome has not understood my efforts; that she has even punished me for them; that sbirri were down upon me. Yet my tears and sufferings will not have been for nothing. Others will take up the task I have been compelled to abandon. Let but one page of what I have written come under the eye of a candid, generous spirit, and he will yield to its arguments and enforce them himself, so that the long chain of witnesses will remain unbroken. Meanwhile, it will be reserved for other ages to see the glorious day whose dawn-ing only has been revealed to us.

"And I—I have been pronounced accursed by the bishops of the day. How could it be otherwise? They can not imagine Catholicism except as propped up in the arms of secular power.

"Now the slaves, now the tyrants of worldly rule, could they possibly be brought to acknowl-

edge that the Church's sole prospect of greatness and glory lay in the total abandonment of the secular element? They have been consistent in their error—as consistent as I have been in never murmuring against them. Teaching what I have taught, I was just fit for the Inquisition.

"As for you, Loubère, you have come to blows with them. For this I never commended you, though I saw at once that an impetuous spirit like yours was not likely to tolerate any intolerant treatment. You must have conceived against them the bitterest animosity. But, at present, I would have you forget these men altogether, and turn your thoughts inward upon yourself. I rely upon your sincerity and integrity to return to God. Your spirit, dear friend, has scarcely been right. Self-examination will convince you of this.

"And sometimes think of me; most probably this will be the last letter you will ever receive from me. I have made my will, and left directions that all my papers should be faithfully transmitted to you. I have bequeathed to you my books, furniture, and scientific collections. What you do not care to keep you may as well deposit in some museum. My small property I have left to the poor—the priest's natural heirs, when he has no needy relations to provide for. I have forbidden a headstone to my grave. You will see that my wishes are complied with.

"Adieu, Loubère. Ever yours, JULIO."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOSPICE OF BIGORRE.

THE mournful presentiment which Julio had expressed in his letter to Loubère was justified by the result. His disease made rapid progress. He was often seized with fainting-fits. His physician advised him, as soon as the snow appeared on the mountains, to leave Campan, where medical aid might not be always attainable in violent weather, and establish himself at Bigorre. Julio understood the meaning of the counsel, and acted upon it. Having completed his arrangements, he removed to the hospice there. What was left of the immense wealth of the La Clavière family was insufficient to defray the expenses of a lodging; so, that he might not injure the poor who were his heirs by touching the sum he had left to them, he resolved to end his days in a poor-house.

The good sisters gave a cordial welcome to the illustrious sufferer. They set apart a warm, well-sheltered room for his accommodation, looking toward the long valley of the Gave as it rolls along, and is lost to view at the foot of the Pen de l'Hieris. Toward the end of November the invalid felt a little better. He was able, indeed, on two or three occasions, to leave his room and walk in the corridor.

One day, when he had prolonged his little tour beyond the ordinary time, he found Sister

Theresa in his room on his return, a nurse who had been specially appointed to wait upon him. He had frequently remarked her tender, delicate thoughtfulness in ministering to all his many wants, and wondered and rejoiced at the loving care he received.

She had prepared his meal, and taken care to secure his favorite food, to tempt his appetite.

"You are better to-day," she said, with a sweet smile, as she waited on him.

"Yes, much better," he replied; "you take such excellent care of me."

"Oh, that God would hear my prayer for your recovery!" and the tears ran down her cheeks.

Julio was much affected. What possible interest could his case create in the bosom of this poor sister, accustomed to see so many consumptive patients?

"Then you often pray for me, Sister Theresa?"

"Yes, indeed, M. l'Abbé—constantly; it is my greatest comfort."

"Thank you, dear friend; you will be the last to cheer me with real sympathy before I leave this world. I feel deeply what you have said, as well as all your constant attention to me, taxing you sometimes, I fear, beyond your strength."

"You have a good claim on my prayers, sympathy, and efforts."

"I don't understand you, daughter."

And a deep blush spread over her cheeks, as though some communication was on the point of escaping her lips.

"I see you have not recognized me," she added.

"Certainly not. I never remember having seen you before."

"But I knew you the moment you entered this house, and right glad I felt when they appointed me to wait on you a week ago. Since I have been near you, however, I have not been able to summon courage enough to tell you who I was, or remind you of all that you have done for me. I owe you more than my life."

Julio thought that Sister Theresa had been one of his penitents at T—— or St. Aventin, and replied under that impression,

"It is a minister's highest privilege to be permitted to do good in the ministry."

But Sister Theresa's distress and perplexity increased. She grew pale and trembled; then, falling on her knees at his feet, she seized one of his hands, and told him every thing.

"I am the young girl," she cried, "from the Valley of Lys, whose honor you saved. You can understand now why I love you so dearly."

"Poor, dear child," said Julio; "God has been very gracious; and to me too, for sending you to my bedside as an angel of consolation. I thank Thee, O God! I can die in her loving arms. Thou hast not forsaken me, and I bless Thy name."

"No, no, you must not die; see, you are better even now. Be hopeful. Oh that I could

give my useless, insignificant life for a noble existence like yours."

"My dear Theresa, you make a mistake. I have thought much, and written much, and God knows how honestly this work has been achieved. Meanwhile, what profit is there left me of all my toil? what good have I done? You are a comfort to the poor; Julio, the author, is useless to every one."

"Oh, but you must live; you shall live; I will make you live, by taking such care of you."

And from that day, known and loved, Theresa redoubled her tender ministrings. They were not in vain; they lengthened his life for a few weeks. His heart warmed under the genial kindness; his semi-delirious moments, even, were not without their charm. Sometimes he mistook Theresa for Louise, and extended his arms to her with a sweet smile.

But his disease, though it made slower progress, was not the less sure. Julio was obliged to give up his daily reading of the breviary, a practice which had been hitherto observed by him with the strictest regularity. Now, however, the effort was too much for his head.

"You may lose him at any moment," the doctor had said to Theresa.

When Julio left Campan, the curé of that place came to Bigorre to discharge his conscience and display his zeal. He called upon the almoner and superior of the hospice, and, assuming an air of profound mystery, detailed the following marvelous intelligence:

"Rome," he said, "had condemned the writings of that wretched priest, who was a Revolutionist, in league with Garibaldi and all the enemies of the papacy. He had taken part, moreover, in all the disturbances at Rome, and had defrayed the expenses consequent upon them. Had he presumed to die in his parish, he would have felt it impossible to have absolved and buried him without first obtaining from him a retraction of his errors. And they would be guilty of a grave dereliction of duty if they failed to use every effort to bring about his reconciliation with the Church."

The lady superior was a good woman, but very silly. On the other hand, the almoner wanted promotion. He thought he might turn an honest penny by the affair. At all events, the two came to an understanding, and one fine morning entered Julio's room with very long countenances. Sister Theresa was away; so they found the poor invalid alone.

"Speak, mother," said the almoner.

"You are a priest—you should speak to the abbé."

"My dear brother, I have a most painful duty to perform," observed the ecclesiastic.

Julio interrupted him:

"Oh no, not at all painful. M. l'Abbé, you come to tell me to prepare for death. I hope, in a day or two, that I shall be able to receive the last sacraments; you will be very welcome then; but I'm not quite ready just now."

"You misunderstand us."

"Do I? May I ask your errand, then?"

"Your writings, your opinions—"

"But, my dear abbé, my writings surely have nothing to do with you? They trench in no way on Catholic teaching."

"Yet a recantation would be as—"

Julio raised himself in his bed, and looked at the two with a quiet, searching, serious look, but said nothing.

"I was observing that a recantation—"

"Did you not understand my silence, M. l'Abbé?"

It was enough—the almoner and mother superior withdrew; managing, however, to propagate a rumor through Bigorre "that Julio had refused the last sacraments, and was resolved to perish in his unbelief."

"You see we were right in saying that this wretched heretic would die the death of Luther and Lamennais," remarked the readers of the *Atlas* to one another. "It's just the way with all the Church's enemies. There he is, struck down in the prime of life, an unpardoned blasphemer and hopeless reprobate."

The mother superior sent for Sister Theresa, and told her of the painful interview which had just transpired.

"Ah! dear daughter," she continued, "let us pray for this unhappy man. What a scandal it would create if he expired without the sacraments!"

"But, dear mother, he is so gentle, pious, and good, he would most certainly wish to die a Christian."

"Yet, if he is to die a Christian, he must retract his errors."

"What errors, mother? I know I'm ignorant; I've never read his books; but I overheard him saying to a priest from T——, a friend of his, who came over to see him, that he had never written anything against the doctrines of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church."

"Oh yes, I know he said as much to the almoner. Still, he is against the temporal power, and so is a heretic."

"Don't you think, however, that the poor priest might be left in peace?"

"Don't you think you are exercising your private judgment a little? Do you wish to take his part?"

"I don't understand you. I take the part of all those I wait upon."

"Quite so. Well, you'd do better if you held your tongue, and went and said a rosary for his soul, in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes."

"I will hold my tongue, mother."

The day after the visit of the mother superior and almoner Julio felt himself worse. Sister Theresa was in the room, looking at him with a fixed, earnest gaze, revealing her inmost thoughts and longings.

"You want to ask me a question, Theresa; I see it in your eyes. Come, don't cry. I understand you; you mean that my time is come;

that I ought to prepare for death. Isn't that what you wish to say?"

"Oh, thank you much," said Theresa, trying to restrain her tears. "You will do that for me, won't you?"

"For God first, and then for you, Theresa."

"Then I'll go and call the almoner."

"No, no, my dear daughter. I respect him as a priest, but I can not speak to him in confidence. Oblige me by fetching the Abbé de Bordère."

And Theresa hastened to comply with his request, having first communicated it to the mother superior.

"Very good," she replied; "but the almoner should administer the extreme unction after his recantation. Otherwise . . ."

The Abbé de Bordère was a priest living in retirement in Bigorre. He belonged to a good family, and had been professor of moral philosophy at Tarbes. Some dispute or other with his diocesan had led to his leaving France in 1826, on which occasion he set out on a missionary expedition in the wilds of North America. On his return from his wanderings, his love for his native country led him to establish himself at Bigorre, where he celebrated mass for a religious order in the town, confessed, visited the sick, cherished two or three private friends, and shunned priests.

He was about seventy years old—a clever man, of a cautious disposition, who spoke little and wrote nothing. He had read extensively, however, and, what was better still, had seen a good deal of the world, and had a most vivid experience of life, reaping great instruction and profit from his numerous journeys.

He was naturally of a resolute disposition, and very self-contained and reserved. Outwardly he was nothing more than a quiet, well-behaved priest, deferential to constituted authority; inwardly he had a soul on fire—a courageous, dare-any-thing spirit; indeed, his resolve to search after truth had led him almost to the verge of skepticism.

He soon reached Julio's room, and Theresa left them together.

"Don't go far away, sister," said Julio.

"Father," said he to the Abbé de Bordère, "I have sent for you because I can confide in you. I feel that my days are numbered, for I know my disease too well to be able to deceive myself on that head. I wish to die in the bosom of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, in which I was born, and of which I am a priest. I believe in her teaching. I have been mixed up with disputes, with questions raised by the interests of the clergy. I am against the temporal power. I think it useless, even dangerous, merely taking into consideration the extent to which it diminishes the moral weight of the papacy. I have never attacked a single doctrine of the Church, and if I refuse to believe what was proclaimed at Rome on the 8th of December, 1854, it's because I don't think the Pope has a right to add to the faith by trans-

fering a simple opinion into a dogma for compulsory credence. I have, however, exposed an ambitious order, which lords it over the priesthood, and charges itself with the general conduct of the Church's affairs; not because they robbed me and my sister of our fortune, but because I am convinced of the evil tendencies of their system. I respect the greater number of the men who compose their fraternity, but I have not spared the spirit which animates them. My writings have been put in the *Index*, it is true; but I don't think you will consider that this circumstance should at all affect our relation to each other at this moment. The question is, can I appear before God with a light heart, though my brother priests have written me 'accursed?' Am I really to be held accountable for the assumed scandal which they say I have created? Tell me, father. If I have been a proud rebel against authority, say so; I am ready at once to humble myself before you, and retrieve the error which I never suspected myself to have committed."

"No, brother, no," said the old man, gently, as he seated himself by Julio's bed; "you have nothing to retract. I know you well; I have read your writings; and if Catholicism could be saved, it would be by men of your simple faith and entire devotion. Your only characteristics have been strictest orthodoxy, and most utter freedom from Ultramontanism. Ah! dear brother, I have studied these questions too. Those very idiots who hate you, and have so mercilessly persecuted you, would have proclaimed you a savior of the Church could they have foreseen that the day must come when the principles you hold will gain undoubted victory. You never denied a doctrine of the truth; you have never been the struggles that I have known—struggles which to you alone I reveal for the first time. Mine has been a life diametrically opposed to yours. You have courted religious discussion; I have avoided it. Publicity has had its charms for you; by me it has been always dreaded. You will die a martyr, reproached by the clergy, while I breathe my last in the bosom of the Church, having censured her in my own thoughts more severely even than you have done. But you will have your reward. Your name will figure where mine will have no place—in the page of history; though encircled with that violent abuse, the lot of men who, in the true nobleness of their spirit, can not brook the tameness of cautious reserve. You are passing from us full of glorious views of truth; I remain, disenchanted and gloomy, deferring the final solution of my terrible doubts till the hour of my departure. Julio, would that I could die as you are dying. You quit this world a real believer, angels of hope and love bearing up your soul to the bosom of God, while I, all but a skeptic, shudder at my desolate position. I know that you will not spurn from you the old man you have chosen to be your spiritual director in your dying moments; but the avowal of sufferings engendered in the

bosom of one of your brethren by convictions such as you have cherished, will show you that you have not been alone in your struggles and trials. I have been confessing to you, you see, instead of you to me, for such revelations as I have made are only for the ears of the dying. Were I to commit them to paper, I should be exposed to every form of contumely and persecution; and I have no idea of running the gauntlet. As for the abuse that has been heaped upon you, you know, as well as I do, that it has been permitted by a gracious God in wise, loving discipline for your soul. But He spurns their blasphemous anathemas. No, martyr-priest, you are not accursed! You are the greatest of us all, for you have suffered the most. Your talents have been conspicuous; your life has been stainless; you might have reached the highest position in the Church, but you rejected the chance. You loved the truth, and fought for it; and you are going where a crown awaits you!"

He paused. Julio asked him to listen to his detailed confession of the faults of his life, from which he desired plenary absolution.

The decree of pardon pronounced, the dying saint seemed to pass into a condition of blissful ecstasy. At that moment a stranger entered and hastily approached his bed. Theresa recognized him in a moment, and sank down at his feet.

"It's you, Loubère!" said Julio, as he marked the well-known face and convulsive grasp of the hand.

Yes, Loubère had come from Paris with all possible speed, warned by the last letter, so full of vague apprehensions.

"It is, dear friend," he said. "Thank God, I see you again!"

Julio seemed to rally for a moment; and, drawing Theresa and Loubère toward him, said to them, in a low tone,

"Poor things! God has brought you together again by my death-bed. Loubère, listen to me. Theresa has expiated her fault and yours by devoting herself to suffering humanity. You have a great work to do in the priesthood. Use your utmost endeavors to recover your spiritual functions. Christian souls are often bowed down with sorrow. Oh, the blessing of a Christian priest, with a heart full of sympathy in their midst—the noblest mission here below!"

At that moment there came on an attack, which appeared, at first, as though it would have carried him off. He rallied sufficiently, however, to say to Sister Theresa,

"My dear child, come here. Raise me a little. I feel I am getting weaker and weaker. Hold me in your arms. I should like to die there. You replace my beloved Louise."

Then stretching out his cold hand to his faithful friend, he added,

"Loubère, you have often told me that you owed me your life, while you saved mine in Italy. Yet there is one other boon I should like to have from you—a promise of a brighter time for your own soul—a hope, as I appear before

God, that you will one day join me. Farewell —not forever. IT IS BLESSED—VERY BLESSED —TO BELIEVE.”

And a gentle sigh, as of a summer evening breeze, passed from the pale lips of the dying across the face of the ministering sister. There went forth upon its wings the soul of the martyr. Julio was gone!

His features shone with the sunshine of Heaven, as the calm grandeur of eternal rest throned itself on his marble brow.

The priest stood by, awe-struck at the sublime spectacle. Then bending an earnest gaze on the rapturous repose and dignity that clothed the face of the dead,

“Glory be to Thy Name, Lord God of hosts,” he cried, as he fell upon his knees, breathing a final benediction; “Thou alone art just. Thou hast given to him whom men held accursed that peace of Thine which passeth all understanding!”

THE END.

